

# IN THESE TIMES

Farm crisis



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\$1.00

## COMPLICITY

*Beirut*

*Massacre*

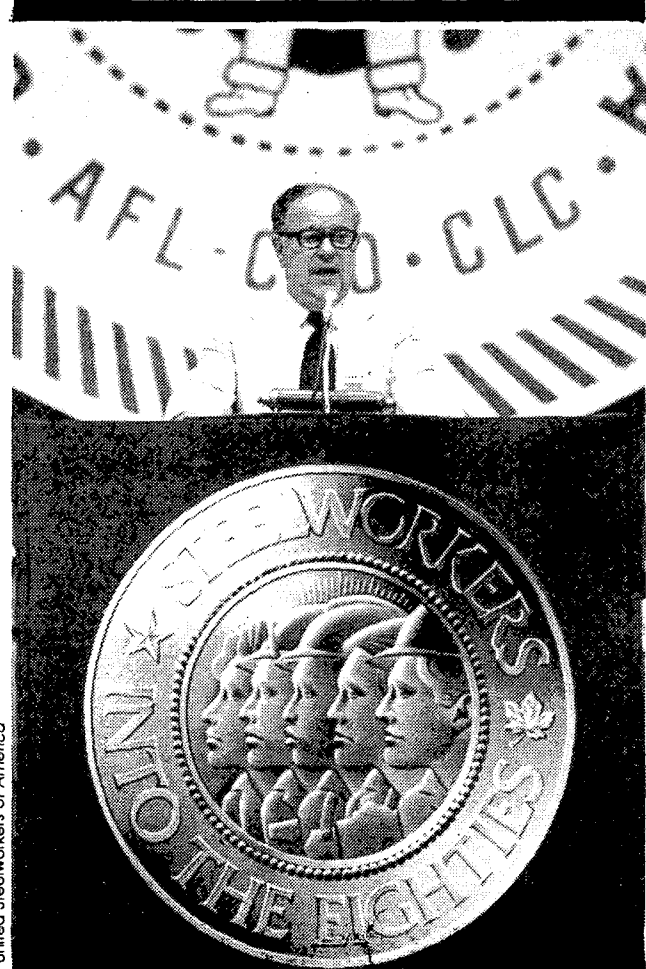


Israelis  
protest  
Begin coverup  
Page 10

What  
the U.S. knew  
Page 11



# THE INSIDE STORY



United Steelworkers of America's Lloyd McBride

## McBride sells out Steelworkers

By David Bensman

CHICAGO

United Steelworkers of America (USW) President Lloyd McBride doesn't want to fight. That was the message at the union's recent Atlantic City convention and the message emerging from union negotiations around the country. McBride is determined there will be no strike next August when the current labor agreement expires, so he used the convention to oppose building up the strike fund and to win approval for concession bargaining. But a recent settlement at U.S. Steel's South Works plant shows how far McBride is willing to take his conciliatory policy.

Local 65 at the southside Chicago plant was particularly vulnerable to corporate blackmail because the mill, like the rest of south Chicago, has been devastated by the current recession. With Wisconsin Steel and Pullman Standard bankrupt, South Chicago has lost 15,000 jobs in the past two years. And 6,000 of Local 65's 7,000 members are now out of work. Furthermore, U.S. Steel had something to offer: The company had announced plans to build a rail mill employing 400 workers. But the conditions were tough—it would build the mill only if Local 65 dropped traditional work rules, Illinois repealed its tax on rails and the Environmental Protection Agency relaxed air-quality standards.

Steelworkers seemed to have no choice. Roy Hollis, a South Works crane operator who's been laid off for more than 14 months, said, "How can we say we ain't going to accept it when we don't have anything? They know they're in the driver's seat. You just have to ride."

Hollis' desperation was understandable, but it wasn't typical. Local 65 had first rejected the company's demands. Of these, the most radical would have abolished craft lines. One proposal would have created "super-crafts" requiring one worker to do the tasks of a millwright, electrician and welder. Another required "operating technicians" to do production and maintenance work, destroying the customary prohibition against skilled workers doing production.

Local 65 wouldn't swallow the destruction of craft traditions, particularly since it would have sped up work and decreased job safety. So in July, the union rejected

company demands. Bitter political conflicts that had divided the union for a decade were laid aside when the officers agreed to stand up to the company's ultimatum. Even recently elected President Donald Stazak, a self-described "company man," went along.

Part of the motivation was anger at the boss, rooted in the experience of working in the mill. When U.S. Steel bought Marathon Oil in February, then threatened to shut South Works down, chronic hostility had become bitter anger. "U.S. Steel has really gotten away with murder," Hollis said. "They just take the money and do what they want to do."

The stand represented a pride in resisting management that was expressed this way by Steve Alexander, a black production worker. "No one wants to back down against the company. It's just that macho toughness of all workers who have a fairly strong union; you don't give in.... To black workers, it's more.... It has a lot to do with this feeling that it's like working in a plantation atmosphere."

But the deepest source of resistance was the workers' sense of honor. Members adhere to certain principles, regardless of their individual interests. Spencer Redd, who has been unemployed for a year, said, "I think an older man should work. I just have to sacrifice, and then I know that one day...I'll be able to work."

But the South Works story did not end here. When national concession talks between USW and eight steel companies collapsed on July 30 (*In These Times*, September 15), McBride determined to use local negotiations to demonstrate the union's continued willingness to meet employers halfway. Stazak asked McBride to send his assistant Sam Camens to help Local 65 with negotiations. Camens warned union bargainers that U.S. Steel was not bluffing. So although Local 65's concessions could be used as precedents at other mills and the new mill would displace more than 1,000 workers at older rail mills, the International gave Local 65 permission to bargain.

The International's intervention changed the South Works story. U.S. Steel dropped many demands, including the "supercraftsmen." But the company insisted on four points, including the "operating technicians."

Local 65 negotiators, led by Mike Ally, chair of the grievance committee, and Edward Sadlowski, the sub-district director, resisted these proposals. In the end, however, Camens' pressure and Stazak's desire to keep South Works open prevailed. On August 25, the bargaining committee tentatively accepted U.S. Steel's four priorities, receiving in return stronger union seniority rights.

On August 27, 1,100 members of Local 65 packed the union hall to discuss the tentative pact. When they heard Alice Peruala, former president of Local 65, and Joe Kransdorf, the plant's leading radical, denounce the agreement, their anger grew. Everybody thought the agreement would be rejected.

Although Stazak had power to sign the agreement, he was pressured into holding an election. To ensure ratification, however, he organized a Soviet-style election. He announced that the vote would be "advisory." If he didn't like the results, he could sign anyway. There would be no debate in the union newspaper, and only Stazak would have access to the mailing list.

The mail ballot read, "Advisory Ballot. Should Local 65 Rail Mill Negotiating Committee sign the Rail Mill Manning Agreement in a joint effort to reestablish South Works as a viable, competitive facility?"

In desperation, Stazak's opponents turned to the press. In a pre-election press conference, Frank Guzzo, president of nearby Republic Steel's Local 1033, expressed concern that concessions at South Works could hurt his local. And Alexander charged the agreement might make it difficult for minorities to be hired at the new rail mill.

But the opposition couldn't beat Stazak's ability to orchestrate the election. When the vote came in September 15, 1,795 members approved concessions while only 305 opposed them. Although the *Chicago Sun Times* commented that it was now virtually certain that the rail mill would be built, only time will tell.

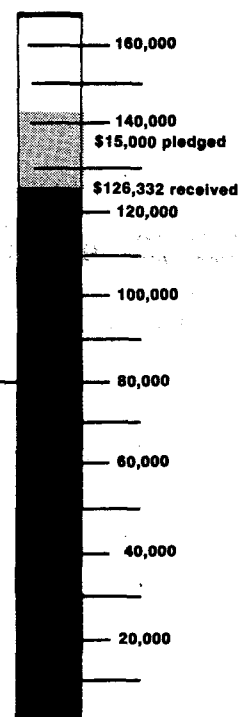
Why did Local 65 approve the concessions? It's clear that the International played a decisive role. Kransdorf comments, "How could the International expect a local with 6,000 of its members on layoff to make a rational decision? The International should make sure that locals are not picked off one by one."

McBride's intervention in South Works would not have been possible had Alice Peruala won re-election last April. But Peruala's support had eroded as some of the older, white skilled workers shifted to Stazak, fearing Peruala's militancy was antagonizing management. The black workers organization has also grown conservative as blacks have gained better paying jobs. With Stazak at the helm, the International was able to influence the bargaining process and the opposition had trouble resisting.

In short, the International's intervention and Local 65's leadership combined to let the workers' calculation of their self-interest overwhelm their spirit of solidarity. If what happened at South Works is any indication, the USW will grant substantial concessions in national bargaining rather than risk a strike next summer.

David Bensman teaches labor studies at Rutgers University.

## Close, but no cigar



During the past two weeks there has been a fall-off in the rate of contributions to our \$160,000 fund drive, though we are now close to the amount needed to get into 1983 in good shape.

One hundred and ninety-one new contributions, in the amount of \$10,425, have brought our total number of contributors to 3,044 and the amount already in hand to \$126,332. With \$15,000 more pledged, our grand total, so far is \$141,332.

This response to our appeal has been more than gratifying, but it is still \$20,000 short of what we need. So if you have been holding back or putting off sending a check, please do so now.

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## IN THESE TIMES

# Pay equity an issue of the '80s

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

**D**URING THE LAST DECADE, the battle for women's rights was most visibly fought over the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and abortion rights. But with the expiration of the ERA deadline, the issue of pay equity between men and women may soon grab the spotlight.

At June's Democratic Conference in Philadelphia, pay equity resolutions and buttons sprouted up like daisies in each workshop session. Pay equity is currently the subject of ongoing hearings in the House of Representatives jointly sponsored by Reps. Geraldine Ferraro (D-N.Y.), Pat Schroeder (D-Colo.) and Mary Rose Oaker (D-Ohio). And at the October 8-10 NOW convention, pay equity is expected to be adopted as a major organizational priority.

With half of its newly organized members during the last decade being women, the labor movement has made pay equity a bargaining issue. At its November 1981 convention, the AFL-CIO pledged to take whatever steps necessary to "bring about true equality in pay for work of comparable value and to remove all barriers to equal opportunity for women."

The differences between men and women's wages are symbolized by ERA proponents' 59¢ buttons that aptly point out that full-time women workers are paid on the average 59 percent of what full-time male workers earn.

Prior to the '60s, this wage gap often resulted from companies paying women less than men for exactly the same jobs. But the Equal Pay Act of 1963—the result of pressure from civil rights groups—outlawed paying unequal wages for equal work, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbade discrimination in employment based on sex as well as race. These two acts did not end discrimination; they merely altered its form.

During the '60s and '70s, wage discrimination increasingly took place through job segregation. Now more than half of all women work in occupations that are at least 70 percent female and are remunerated less than workers in predominantly male occupations with similar skill and training (see chart). In Montgomery County, Maryland, a male liquor store clerk, with a high school diploma and two years experience, averaged \$12,479 a year in 1979, while a female elementary school teacher, with two years experience and a college diploma, averaged \$12,323. Nurses in Denver received a starting monthly salary of \$1,064, while new male tree trimmers received \$1,164 a month.

Winn Newman, special counsel to the American Federation of State, Municipal and County Employees (AFSCME) on women's and minority rights, said at the recent House hearings, "The passage of the Equal Pay Act may have had the unintended effect of encouraging employers to segregate female employees into different job classifications (but without eliminating the pay differential) so that they could no longer fall within the coverage of the Equal Pay Act."

## Legal victories.

In the past five years, the movement for pay equity has operated on three different fronts. In the courts, it has sought to broaden the interpretation of Title VII to include equal pay for jobs of comparable worth and not merely equal pay for equal work. At the collective bargaining table, unions have tried to force employers to conduct job evaluation studies on the basis of which they could win pay equity adjustments. And in Washington, the pay-equity movement has tried to pressure the Labor Department and the Equal



More than half of all American women now work in occupations that are at least 70 percent female and are remunerated less than workers in predominantly male occupations with similar skill and training.

Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to enforce pay equity.

In the courts, the movement has had both failures and successes. In 1977, female clerical workers at Northern Illinois University, who were paid less than physical plant workers, brought suit against the state, but the court ruled that the plaintiffs "failed to demonstrate that the difference in wages paid...rested upon sex discrimination and not on some other legitimate reason."

In 1978, Denver's nurses lost a similar suit. But in 1981, the Supreme Court ruled in the *County of Washington v. Gunther* that under Title VII matrons at an Oregon prison, who were being paid 70 percent of what male guards were receiving, were victims of sex discrimination.

The *Gunther* ruling broadened existing law by applying Title VII to a case where the occupations were similar but not identical. As Newman has pointed out, however, the court did not rule on the illegality of wage discrimination that operated structurally but without clear intent of discrimination. "They did not say where they could come out if there was no intent demonstrated," Newman told *In These Times*.

Newman and other pay-equity advocates argue that the court must apply to sex wage discrimination the same principles it applied to school segregation. "Where you have segregation and you have disparate wages you have what the Supreme Court found in *Brown v. Board of Education*," Newman explained.

Unions like the International United Electrical Workers (IUE), American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and the Communications Workers of America (CWA), as well as the American Nurses Association and the National Education Association have increasingly made pay equity a bargaining issue. Last year, AFSCME Local 101 struck the city of San Jose over pay inequities and won a settlement that included "special adjustments" to upgrade job classifications held mostly by women.

This year, without success, nurses at four hospitals in Santa Clara County, Calif., went on strike. And the CWA has

won the agreement of the American, Telephone and Telegraph Company to a labor-management job evaluation committee that will submit a plan to the 1983 bargaining session for redressing pay inequities.

Under the Carter administration, the pay equity movement made significant gains. The Labor Department directed the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs to make pay equity a requirement. The EEOC, under Eleanor Holmes Norton, championed pay equity and funded a study by the National Academy of Sciences that found that the "strategy of 'comparable worth'...merits consideration as an alternative policy of intervention in the pay-setting process wherever women are systematically underpaid."

But under the Reagan administration the Labor Department and the EEOC have abandoned pay equity. An August 1981 EEOC memorandum recommended that the Commission dismiss without investigation all wage discrimination charges and instead issue "right-to-sue" letters. This places the financial burden of proving wage discrimination on unions and women workers.

In a recent *Christian Science Monitor*

interview, EEOC general counsel Michael Connolly argued that pay equity violates the free market. "If the comparable worth can of worms gets opened, and the law of supply and demand and free market doesn't apply, it will be doing a great disservice to females and minorities in the country," Connolly said.

Pay equity proponents point out that wage discrimination defies the free market to begin with. For instance, salaries of nurses have remained depressed in spite of a nationwide shortage. Some hospitals recruited in Scotland and the Philippines rather than using the "market" (i.e. higher wages) to attract new workers.

## The movement.

The pay equity movement is being organized through the National Committee on Pay Equity, housed in National Education's Washington headquarters. Formed in 1979, the committee now has 100 member organizations, including the major unions that represent women and organizations like NOW and 9 to 5.

The opponents of pay equity are often unwilling to make their case in public. No Labor Department official nor corporate opponent of pay equity was willing to testify at the recent House hearings. But one organization, the Equal Employment Advisory Council (EEAC) has taken the lead in fighting pay equity. Organized by Washington attorney Kenneth C. McGuinness, EEAC's sponsoring corporations include Sears, Exxon and General Electric. With a \$1 million budget, it has filed briefs on behalf of corporations in pay equity suits.

EEAC's philosophy, as outlined by one of its attorneys, is that wage discrimination should be remedied by the Equal Pay Act and by upward mobility. EEAC's main fear is that new legislation will be passed that, in the attorney's words, "will involve federal courts in dictating wages for jobs."

Curiously, the proponents of pay equity do not agree on the need for new legislation. In his testimony at the House hearings, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) promised to introduce legislation that would make pay inequity illegal.

But Newman and leaders of the National Committee insist that the laws already exist to outlaw pay inequity. "We feel our political energies are best used getting government to enforce laws already on the books," said one National Committee official.

At NOW's forthcoming convention, some members will be pressing to make pay equity a major focus of the organization. There are even ripples of dissatisfaction with the amount of past emphasis given to the ERA rather than issues like pay equity.

But National Committee Executive director Joy Ann Gruen insists that the struggle for the ERA laid the groundwork for the acceptance of pay equity as an organizing goal. "Comparable worth is the new kid on the block," Gruen said. "It might not have been there at all without the work done for the ERA."

	Occupation	Monthly Salary	Points
Minnesota	Registered Nurse (F)	\$1723	275
	Vocational Ed. Teacher (M)	2260	275
	Typing Pool Supervisor (F)	1373	199
	Painter (M)	1707	185
Washington	Licensed Practical Nurse (F)	1030	173
	Correctional Officer (M)	1436	173
	Secretary (F)	1122	197
	Maintenance Carpenter (M)	1707	197
San Jose, Ca.	Senior Legal Secretary (F)	665	226
	Senior Carpenter (M)	1040	226
	Senior Librarian (F)	898	493
	Senior Chemist (M)	1119	493

Pressured by unions, several states and cities have undertaken job evaluations that rank jobs in total points according to skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions. By comparing the salaries given to primarily female and primarily male occupations that are otherwise equal or similar in rank, unions have been able to pinpoint sex wage-discrimination.



# IN SHORT

## Dying in the rain

Air pollution may have accounted for one out of every 50 deaths in the U.S. and Canada during 1980, states a report released by Congress' Office of Technology Assessment. Transportable pollutants in the air triggered as many as 51,000 deaths from respiratory and cardiac disorders, according to study director Dr. Robert Friedman. The main air pollution health hazard is sulfur dioxide emissions from coal-fired electric power plants, which are carried hundreds of miles through the air and returned to earth in the form of acid rain. Canadian officials have urged an immediate program of pollution controls on sulfur dioxide and other emissions, but the Reagan administration remains unswayed. Alan Hill, chair of the President's Council on Environmental Quality, recently said he opposes any further pollution curbs until more information is available on the health hazards of acid rain. But according to the congressional report, if air pollution remains constant over the next 20 years, we can expect 57,000 premature deaths a year.

## A tale of five cities

National People's Action (NPA) took its "Reclaim America" campaign—an effort to pinpoint and negotiate with individuals, corporations and government agencies putting the squeeze on lower- and middle-income people—on the road last month with rallies in five cities. The traveling protest was launched in Chicago on September 10, when NPA members and other activists marched through the LaSalle Street financial district demanding jobs and economic justice. The Continental Illinois Bank, which recently suffered great losses because of a bank failure in Oklahoma, was targeted for criticism for not investing more money to meet the needs of Chicago's neighborhoods.

September 11 was "Reclaim America Day" in Cleveland, thanks to a proclamation by Mayor George Voinovich. Rep. Louis Stokes of the Black Congressional Caucus spoke at a morning rally at City Hall and then busloads of demonstrators descended on the posh Chagrin Valley Hunt Club where Sohio Oil Company president Alton Whitehouse was supposed to be attending a horse show. Whitehouse, one of the ring leaders in the corporate push for decontrol of natural gas, was not there but startled members of the club promised to relay the message that local NPA members wanted to meet with him. Philadelphia and the 11th annual NPA Congress was the next stop on the protest itinerary.

The Reclaim America caravan had grown to 25 busloads for the trip to Washington, D.C., September 13. The capital city provided many targets, including the National Chamber of Commerce headquarters, the office of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and Republican and Democratic party offices. The Reclaim America week wound up in New York City the next day with a march through Wall Street and a rally outside the offices of Exxon's headquarters. Outside the Exxon building, protesters discovered that one of the "freelance writers" covering the event was actually an Exxon employee wearing a company pin adorned with a diamond to prove it.

"It's funny that they're not willing to meet with us but that they're willing to send someone to spy on us," noted Vera Benedek, an NPA leader from Chicago. "A lot of people cancelled meetings or left town for the weekend to avoid meeting us. But they can't ignore these issues forever. We are in the process of meeting with some of these people now."

## Sweet home Manila

President Ferdinand Marcos, his wife, their entourage and an estimated 800 pieces of luggage are back in the Philippines after a 10-day U.S. tour that featured warm words from administration officials and a steady series of hostile protesters. It must be an abrupt change to come home to an impoverished country, where some people place the unemployment rate as high as 30 percent, after enjoying state dinners and a \$2,000-a-night presidential suite at New York's Waldorf Towers Hotel (Mrs. Marcos occupied the Royal Suite, which went for \$1,650 a night.) In addition to heaping portions of goodwill from the Reagan administration, Marcos also returned with the promise of a guaranteed \$204.5 million for a nuclear power plant, as well as trade, agriculture, tourism and military agreements from the Reagan administration to bolster his position in a time of continuing opposition at home.

## Falwell doesn't have a prayer

With three crucial votes on school prayer coming up in Congress recently and other issues from the New Right's agenda of social issues being debated, you can be sure that the Moral Majority has been working overtime. But according to Jerry Falwell, the organization's founder, you can be equally sure that few of their strategy sessions began with a prayer. "If we ever opened a Moral Majority meeting with a prayer, silent or otherwise, we would disintegrate," he told a meeting of the Religious Newswriters Association. Cal Thomas, the Moral Majority's communications director, explained that Protestants, Catholics, Jews and non-religious people all belong to the group. He asked, "What kind of prayer would we use?"

—Jay Walljasper



In the upcoming Brazilian elections, the ruling PDS might be relegated to third place as a result of expansion of the new Workers Party created by "Lula" (man above), the leader of the 1978 car workers strike that shattered the foundations of the regime.

## Brazil will hold election

SAO PAULO—On Nov. 15 about 50 million Brazilians will cast their votes in the most important election to be held in this country since the introduction of "political thaw" (*abertura*) four years ago. And this question is already on everybody's lips: Will the armed forces accept what might be a victory for the opposition, or will they end *abertura*? This is a question whose importance goes beyond the boundaries of Brazil because the fate of the 18-year-old military regime will inevitably affect the political future of all of South America.

This will be the first time since 1965 that voters will choose state governors, one of the most important democratic exercises within the framework of Brazil's political traditions prior to the military coup. Also for the first time, as a result of the cancellation of the 1980 local elections, voters at the same time choose much of the country's political representation, from mayor and local councilors to federal deputies and one-third of the Senate.

Only the presidential seat is not at stake since General Figueiredo's successor will not be chosen until 1984. But the electoral college that makes that decision is composed of senators, federal and state deputies in such a proportion that if the opposition wins in 10 major states, it will have a majority in it, on top of a majority in the Congress.

The latest forecasts suggest that the ruling Democratic Social Party (PDS) might be defeated in as many as 16 states, which comprise about 80 percent of Brazil's population.

Brazil's military regime has enjoyed the unique feature of holding elections regularly without ever losing power. Occasionally, the ruling military-civilian technocracy had to resort to straightforward political violence, such as the expulsion of elected representatives through the use of a Special Powers Act, in order to restore their majority. Their goal was to achieve the efficiency of the Mexican sys-

tem, by which the ruling party never loses an election because it manipulates all the resources of the state machinery.

But following the oil crisis and the collapse of the "Brazilian economic miracle"—which destroyed the dreams of the middle class that had supported the regime—the opposition party made two consecutive advances, in 1974 and again in 1978. The military think-tank in Brasilia decided it was time to break apart the rigid two-party system because all the dissenting votes were forcefully channeled to the only existing opposition party, the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB), a wide front comprising everyone from Communists to centrists.

Thus *abertura* was born. Press censorship was abolished and a political amnesty was granted. Opposition leaders returned from exile, among them Leonel Brizola, who inherited deposed President Joao Goulart's populist movement. Luis Carlos Prestes, the 80-year-old leader of the Communist Party, also returned. With political space suddenly enlarged, the broad opposition front split, as the army think tank had predicted. To consolidate the split, President Figueiredo introduced strict rules prohibiting electoral alliances between the new political parties.

But the rules were too strict. So a new party was set up by bankers and other business leaders dissatisfied with the stagnant economy and increasing authoritarianism of the regime. But then they disbanded and joined the liberal opposition before Figueiredo had time to react. This political front will get votes from a wide spectrum of the population. The Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), as it is now called, may win in many important states.

Recent statements by army generals suggest that they may accept defeat—if it is an "honorable defeat," which means if they can win in some important states. Also in a recent meeting between General Figueiredo and his predecessor, General Geisel, the two agreed on a tactical alliance to preserve the policy of "relaxation." This is a powerful front by the two main factions of the army against the

small but hard core of officers who dispute the wisdom of *abertura* and are already reputed to be plotting a political clamp-down.

—Bernardo Kucinski

## Suits claim A-tests deadly

ST. GEORGE, UTAH—As JoAnn Workman testified last month about the A-bomb test dubbed "Dirty Harry," her face showed greenish splotches—side effects of the chemotherapy being used to treat her cancer. The day the bomb went off—one of 84 above-ground tests at the Nevada Test Site—she said she was "burned to a crisp."

"I was shocked when I saw my face," she testified. It was covered with black and white specks. The day after the test, bald spots appeared on her head.

JoAnn Workman is one of nearly 1,200 plaintiffs from Utah, Nevada and Arizona who are suing the federal government for negligence in regard to the tests, which they say are responsible for many cases of cancer in the area. They claim that federal plans to protect residents from radioactive fallout produced by above the ground tests between 1951-62 were inadequate.

At the heart of the \$2 billion case is the question: Did the U.S. government knowingly sacrifice its own citizens to further atomic research during a time of fervor about national security?

The government contends that its safeguards were satisfactory and that the plaintiffs cannot prove radiation caused an increased rate of cancer in the area. Government attorneys are under pressure to win this case not only because of its effects on the federal purse, but also to maintain a shred of credibility on nuclear issues. It is also believed the outcome of the case could alter acceptable radiation dose levels for workers in the nuclear industry and the public as a whole.

In 1951 the Cold War was chilling the land. An arms race with the Soviet Union was on, and the U.S. was frantically trying to stay ahead. The tensions brought an "overriding urgency" to the weapons tests, said



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Richard Elliott, an official in charge of radiation monitoring. It was also a time when the fear of radiation was slight. Families in places like St. George, Utah, would rise before dawn, climb the nearby bluffs and watch the displays of light and feel the tremors from the bomb's blast 120 miles away.

"The whole western sky would light up," explained Elmer Pickett. "Of course they (Atomic Energy Commission) assured us there was no danger. ...Then, right after daylight sometime, the big red clouds would go rolling across—which were the death clouds."

"I feel we were human guinea pigs," Pickett adds, "that we were used by insensitive people who were more concerned with playing with their toys and didn't want anyone to interfere."

During the entire 11 years of testing—before the explosions were moved underground as part of the U.S.-Soviet Test Ban Treaty—Pickett can remember only one time when residents were warned to stay inside after a blast. He heard an announcement on the radio while working in his hardware store, but didn't think to call his wife Viola who frequently worked in her garden.

Viola Pickett died in 1960 of a rare combination of Hodgkin's Disease and leukemia—both diseases frequently connected to radiation exposure. Pickett not only lost his wife to cancer, but his sister, niece, grandmother, two uncles, an aunt, two great-uncles, a sister-in-law and a mother-in-law. Yet according to Pickett, family records show no history of cancer.

"I do not know of a single family that was here during that period that hasn't lost quite a few relatives," Pickett said.

Indeed the cancer rate for the area—particularly leukemia, thyroid cancer and stomach cancer—seems to be much higher

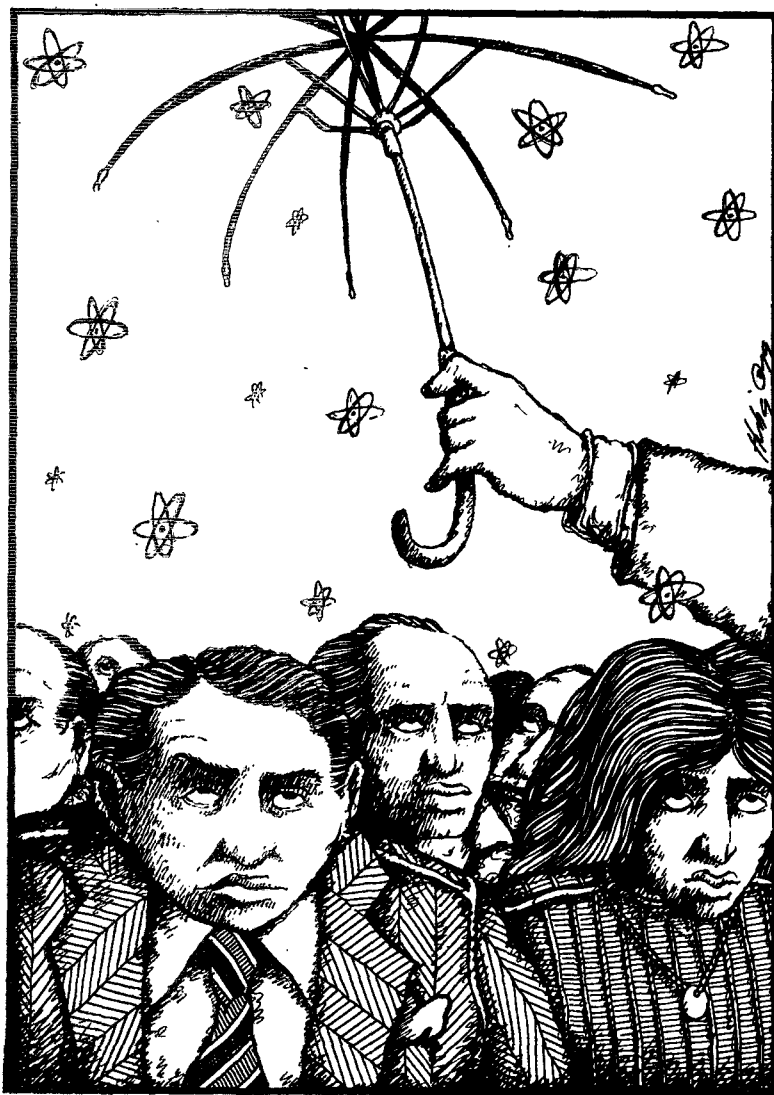
than the national average. A study of children born in St. George during the testing period showed a rate two-and-a-half times higher than the national average. This sharply contrasts with the rest of Utah, which has a cancer rate lower than the national average. Another statistical study of several small towns along the Arizona/Utah border found the incidence of leukemia as much as 20 times higher than would be expected. But with populations so small, the number of cases are also small, making absolute medical conclusions difficult.

Yet the government still insists, as it did in 1955, that the risk from the fallout was minimal. Ten, perhaps 100, additional cases may have been caused by the radiation, they say, which is negligible compared to the 35,000 cases that could be normally expected over the lifetimes of the region's 170,000 residents. They also argue that no one can prove what caused a particular individual's cancer, and this is the soft spot in the case.

Other investigations, more political in nature, line up on the side of the residents, however. A 1980 House subcommittee conducted hearings in Utah and concluded that the A-bomb testing "more likely than not" caused the increase in cancer. And after 1979 hearings Sen. Edward Kennedy (D.-Mass.) said he believed that the Atomic Energy Commission had covered up the extent of the radiation contamination. In addition, a 1956 case involving the death of 4,390 sheep grazing downwind from a test blast was recently reopened because the federal judge in the case ruled that the government had perpetuated "a fraud upon the court" by pressuring expert witnesses and suppressing evidence.

—Paul Choitz

#### A hard rain in Utah



Paul Constock

## Briefing: Chain reaction

News on nuclear energy, nuclear weapons and the anti-nuclear movement

In August, the Reagan administration and defense industry lobbyists succeeded in persuading the House of Representatives to reject a nuclear freeze resolution. As many as 2,000 industry lobbyists—compared to about a dozen peace and environmental lobbyists—made sure members of Congress voted in favor of more bombs. But the hawks' narrow victory may only be a temporary one.

The truth about radiation fallout is unfolding daily during the multimillion-dollar damage suit (see adjoining story) against the federal government brought by 1,192 residents of Utah, Arizona and Nevada who lived in the shadow of the nuclear bomb tests conducted from 1951 to 1962.

Recently, four veterans who participated in nuclear bomb tests in the Marshall Islands also said they would sue the government for exposing them to 15 times the "safe" level of radiation allowed for nuclear workers and for engaging "in a conspiracy to cover up and conceal vital scientific information," according to their legal papers. All four vets have cancer or suffer other medical problems. More than 220,000 soldiers participated in the Pentagon's bomb test program, many of whom were ordered never to reveal any details of their work.

Unfortunately, the lawsuits come after the damage is al-

ready done. But in November, one-quarter of the American voting population will have an opportunity to tell the superpowers they'd rather not be the next victims of nuclear proliferation. Eight states will have a nuclear freeze referendum on the ballot: California, Oregon, Arizona, North Dakota, Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey and Massachusetts as well as the District of Columbia and the city of Chicago. If last month's vote in Wisconsin (*In These Times*, Sept. 29) is any indication of grassroots freeze support, the referendum should be approved by wide margins. Three out of every four Wisconsin voters endorsed "a mutual (U.S.-USSR) nuclear weapons moratorium and reduction, with appropriate verification...."

In Colorado, voters will decide whether to set up a trust fund (via voluntary contributions paid with the state income tax) to convert the Rocky Flats nuclear bomb factory to a peaceful business.

Since nuclear weapons aren't the only source of radiation hazards, several other referenda in November will deal with nuclear power plants. In Maine, voters will decide whether to shut down the only operating nuclear power plant in the state by 1987. Afraid of losing, the plant's owner has collected funds from other utilities throughout the U.S. to improve its image and win votes. In Massachusetts, voters will decide whether or not they should directly approve any future nuclear waste dumps rather than leave the decision to the government.

If nuclear safety becomes a matter for the ballot box—instead of waiting and filing law suits later—then the experts in government and industry may soon be out of jobs. For more information on this year's nuclear referenda, contact the Nuclear Information Resource Service (NIRS), 1346 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. The NIRS legislation hotline is 1-800-424-2477, from 1-5 p.m., EST.

Last month, Judge Louis J. Carter resigned in protest as chairman of a panel appointed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to conduct a hearing on safety at the Indian Point nuclear power plant, located 25 miles north of New York City. Carter later told the House subcommittee on energy conservation and power that he quit because the NRC unfairly restricted the panel by requiring that any testimony concerning the consequences of a nuclear accident must also include the statistical likelihood of such an accident. Apparently the most devastating accident can be ignored if it's statistically not supposed to happen—like Three Mile Island.

Carter also told the subcommittee that citizen groups lack the kind of resources that utilities and the government possess to present their case. "It makes me angry that their interests are not fully represented," he said. "In fact, it makes me mad as hell.... Frankly, it [the Indian Point hearing] was the New York Jets against your local high school team."

Judge Carter has been replaced with someone more cooperative. But the hearings haven't yet resumed.

—Susan Jaffe



## IN THE NATION

## NEW YORK

## Cuomo trounces Koch in primary

By Paul A. Du Brul

NEW YORK

SOMETIMES NICE GUYS FINISH first. In this state's largest and most expensive primary two weeks ago, Mario Cuomo, the philosophical, fast-quipping lieutenant-governor who is a recognized master of the gracious concession speech, emerged as the surprising but convincing winner of the Democratic nomination for governor. He now faces free-spending millionaire drugstore heir Lewis Lehrman, who won the Republican nod.

Cuomo doesn't try to hide the fact that he is a traditional Democrat. He volubly opposed the death penalty, allied himself with minorities and labor and made speeches praising the New Deal and the Great Society. His victory—coming on the heels of the Dukakis win in Massachusetts and left primary wins in Connecticut (*In These Times*, September 22)—clearly shows northeast Democrats returning to the fold after a brief and disastrous flirtation with Reaganism.

What makes this victory so sweet for left Democrats is that Cuomo not only trounced New York City mayor Ed Koch, the quintessential neo-conservative and Ronald Reagan's favorite mayor, but the city and state establishment as well. All three city dailies and the leading TV station had endorsed Koch. Bankers, developers and Wall Street brokers who do business with the state and city governments had raised a \$3.5 million war chest for the mayor. Almost every elected Democratic official and the overwhelming majority of the county organizations endorsed Koch: The Teamsters, most of the construction trades and uniformed city workers unions all backed the outspokenly anti-union mayor. In an apt gesture, the Cuomo campaign song became the theme from *Rocky*.

But Cuomo was never the hopeless underdog portrayed in a series of disastrously flawed polls commissioned by the media and published intermittently throughout the campaign. He was well known to the public from previous campaigns, and well liked by the working press who gave him frequent coverage despite his low visibility positions as secretary of state and lieutenant-governor. He raised \$1.7 million (about half of Koch's campaign budget), and spent \$1 million of it on TV commercials.

But his greatest strength came from some of the state's biggest and most progressive unions, especially AFSCME, the Communications Workers and the United Auto Workers (UAW), and the more conservative unions like the Teachers and the ILGWU. They gave money and printing, but more importantly, they put together a sophisticated vote-pulling operation and were able to field almost 10,000 precinct workers on primary day.

Cuomo also received significant support from most of the state's black elected officials and a number of key Hispanic leaders, which enabled him to roll up two-to-one margins in minority Assembly districts. Black and Hispanic participation in the primary was motivated by a strong hostility to Koch as well as a number of heated contests for new congressional, state legislature and city council seats, all created as the result of a bitter redistricting struggle. This heightened minority participation provided Cuomo's margin of victory and set a new record

turnout of 44 percent for Democrats in the city. Statewide participation was 38 percent—much higher than the usual primary vote.

A number of less tangible factors played a role in the outcome. Koch alienated upstate residents by his wisecracks about rural and suburban life in a *Playboy* interview published soon after he announced his candidacy. Then, the week before the primary, there were indications that Koch may have been hurt by public anger over the massacres in West Beirut because of his flaunted ties with Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Defense Minister Ariel Sharon.

Surprisingly, the death penalty—the centerpiece of Koch's two mayoral campaigns—seems to have played a diminished role in this election, although Cuomo was consistently confronted on it. Koch's own failure to play a leadership role on the issue during last year's legislative debates may have cost him credibility—he drags out the electric chair only during election campaigns. Or this may simply be one more indication that the econ-

ly on TV, and may spend that much again before the general election is over.

But he may be experiencing overexposure. His commercials are becoming more frenetic—sort of like Frank Perdue on an acid trip—and his constant invasion of people's living rooms in shirt sleeves and red suspenders may make the household word an unprintable one.

Bill Haddad, Cuomo's campaign manager, has called Lehrman a Reagan clone. That's unfair. He is really a Jack Kemp clone. He wants to return to the gold standard, abolish welfare and slash state taxes. (He cut his own quite effectively by living across the border in Pennsylvania, only moving back to meet the constitutional residency requirement for running for governor.)

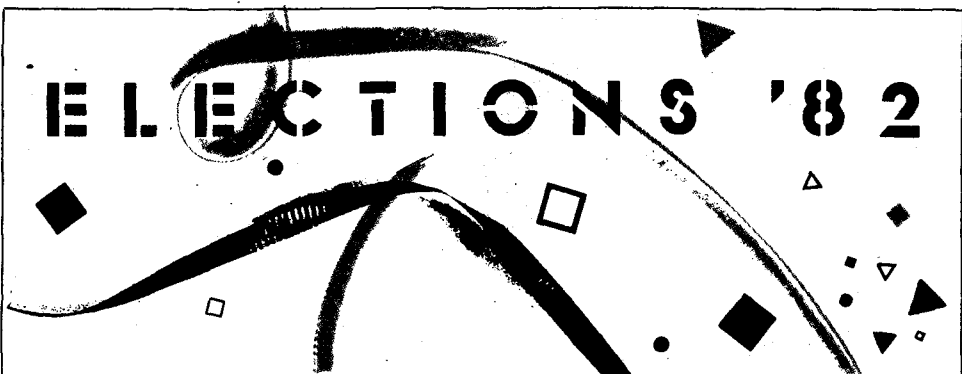
Cuomo should have little trouble re-establishing his credentials as the centrist candidate in this race, although the *New York Times* observed in commenting on the primary outcome, "...When 10 percent of the people are out of work, traditional liberalism is the center." In fact,

yet moved to abolish even more glaring ripoffs at the state level.

It's unclear how many of Cuomo's positions were the result of his loyalty to his long-term friend Governor Hugh Carey, who turned out to be an extremely poor and erratic chief executive. Cuomo has an incisive mind and has always kept his lines of communication open with a variety of differing viewpoints. Perhaps governing in his own right, he will be willing to make some sharp breaks with past positions.

What is clearest about the man is his profound and long-held commitment to bridging the gaps between ethnic, racial and religious groups. In this election, he has already made an important start in that direction by re-establishing the Democratic coalition of labor, minorities and "progressives."

As noted earlier, there were a number of bitter fights between left Democrats and machine candidates, especially in the bedroom boroughs of Brooklyn and



Mario Cuomo was never the hopeless underdog in the Democratic gubernatorial primary as portrayed by a flawed series of pre-election polls.

omy is the overriding issue with voters.

Whatever the case, the issue will be a major theme of the fall campaign, since Lehrman is a dedicated executioner and has pushed the death penalty hard in his massive TV campaign. (One was figured out that if Lehrman's commercials were played nationally at the same rate they were shown in New York, he would be the most advertised product in America.) Lehrman, who has never held public office, was unknown until his TV blitz made him a household word. He has spent \$7 million of his own money, most-

while outspoken on issues like the death penalty and Medicaid abortion, Cuomo is best described as a Carter Democrat (He ran Carter's re-election campaign in New York and the two are personally close). He supports the \$4 billion Westway boondoggle, stood by while Governor Hugh Carey cut \$3 billion in taxes for corporations and wealthy individuals and was the point man for prison and transit bond issues that would have cost small taxpayers billions when better alternatives were available. He criticized Koch for tax breaks for developers, but hasn't

Queens. In the heart of black Brooklyn, State Senator Major Owens won the congressional seat formerly held by Rep. Shirley Chisholm in a bitter fight that included tampering with voting machines, fist fights and vicious racist literature.

Owens was part of a Community Empowerment slate that ran a large number of campaigns for various posts. Some of these candidates won and others came extremely close, mobilizing record turnouts and proving once again that poor people will participate in the electoral process when there are real gains to be won.

Unfortunately, machine candidate Ed Towns captured a newly created minority congressional district when the reform and Hispanic votes were split by two Hispanic candidates. Towns should face a tough fight two years from now.

In Brooklyn Heights, young attorney Steve DiBrienza came within a hair of defeating 69-year-old Tom Cuite, czar of the New York City Council. In western Queens, Anne Marie Delaney almost unseated Tom Manton, the landlord candidate who controls the Council's Housing Commission. Frank Barbaro, who ran a tough campaign for mayor against Ed Koch last year and was placed at the top of Koch's hit list, was easily re-elected, as was Councilmember Miriam Friedlander, against whom Koch and the *New York Times* ran a vicious red-baiting campaign.

Democratic Socialists of America members played an active role in several of these local campaigns, just as they provided a major force in last year's mayoral campaign against Koch. This fall they will be working actively to elect Cuomo governor, to defeat "Gypsy Moth" Republican Bill Green with Betty Lall, a labor educator and peace activist, and to re-elect Ruth Messinger, Jerry Nadler and others to the City Council and state legislature.

The momentum provided by the Cuomo upset and the growing disillusion with Reaganomics leaves the real possibility of major Democratic gains in November and a struggle for new, more progressive policies at City Hall and in Albany in 1983.

Paul A. Du Brul is a frequent contributor to the *Village Voice* and co-author with Jack Newfield of *The Permanent Government: Who Really Runs New York?*



## AGRICULTURE

## For farmers, echoes of the Depression



By Ken Meter

## MINNEAPOLIS

**T**HE FLIGHT OF AMERICAN farmers grows darker by the day. Although record harvests are expected this fall, prices are plummeting, and it's becoming apparent that few farmers will be able to pay their debts. As a last-gap measure, the handful of farmers who fought farm foreclosures this spring (*In These Times*, May 26) are now rallying their neighbors. Each week brings more standoffs between lenders and borrowers.

In Westbrook, Minn., farmers recently blocked a foreclosure attempt on Wydon and Aretta Hanson (see page 24, this issue). The auction crowd of 200 was dotted by farmers wearing red bandanas in their front pockets—a symbol adopted by foreclosure opponents.

At a recent auction in Wymar, Neb., Don and Barbara Hawkin tied yellow ribbons on some farm equipment to alert people that they shouldn't bid on this machinery.

Disgusted with the Farmers Home Administration's (FmHA) refusal to loan him money, Rob Roesler took a plow to his field in August. He invited some of his Orient, S.D., neighbors to help. Eight tractors destroyed 15 acres of his field crop before police intervened. FmHA claimed the corn was federal property.

According to Roesler, Farmers Home had told him his loan was ready, so he could go ahead and buy cattle. But after the purchase, "They called me and said not to," he said. So Roesler headed for the fields. With less than 24 hours notice, 200 neighbors came to observe.

"Forty or 50 of them stood up before the national media and admitted they were broke," Roesler said. "If I had to sacrifice my farming situation to make television, it was worth it to help others."

"I've seen this coming for four or five years. I've been living on the false hope the government would make it better. There's not a single farmer out here who is making all of their payments. I don't think the FmHA wants to foreclose. They will just stop financing," he added.

Said Dave Ostendorf, associate director of the Des Moines-based Rural America, Inc., "It's like a simmering pot out here. It's breaking everywhere."

Rural America is part of a nationwide effort to call attention to the desperate situation farmers face in the worst farm

year in a half century (see sidebar). On October 2, gatherings in more than 10 states were held in observance of what had been dubbed "National Farm Crisis Day."

In Eau Claire, Wisc., a day-long farm-city fair convened at the Federal Building. Minnesota farmers held workshops and a state capitol rally. The Iowa fairgrounds was the site of a rally and meeting of FmHA borrowers. Texas—recently the site of tractorcades—hosted a rally in Austin. Events were also held in Michigan, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Texas, Illinois and Missouri. At all of these events there was strong support from labor.

Crisis Day was called to bring together the nation's farmers and to stress the economic ties between them and the rest of the workforce.

"If farmers are forced from their fields," reads a statement prepared by Crisis Day planners, "workers will be forced from their jobs." The statement listed two demands: "Parity farm prices are necessary to improve our economic situation and reduce unemployment; until this adequate farm price program is established, there must be a moratorium on all forced farm sales."

Although farmers' numbers are few they occupy a central position in the economy much more crucial than indicated by their share of the GNP—20 percent of food and fiber. Like miners, lumberers,

**The USDA predicts that, after exports, 125 million tons of surplus grain will be on hand next year.**

oil drillers and others, farmers harness raw materials used by workers in other industries. These raw materials bring new wealth to the economy. And this new wealth backs up new currency issues.

Farmers now produce about 70 percent of all new wealth in the American economy. Since World War II, farmers have increasingly bailed out deficits in other sectors of the economy that are running close to \$60 billion a year. Currently, grain exports offset the nation's massive oil imports.

In recent years, farmers have been valued largely for the wealth they produce rather than the food they grow. Of the eight billion bushels of corn produced in

the country last year, only 5 percent was for human consumption. The rest became raw material in other industries—for uses as diverse as cattle food, paint pigments and explosives. The same is true of soybeans, the nation's second largest cash crop.

Similarly, grain exports have become more useful as a tool for enforcing America's foreign policy than as a source of food for starving peoples. "Food is a weapon," as Hubert Humphrey and former Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz used to say.

As a source of wealth, food, raw materials and foreign-policy weapons all at once, farmers produced \$100 billion worth of farm commodities in 1980. But they went more than \$200 billion into debt to do it. And when the producers of new wealth go broke, the rest of the country is in trouble.

Yet the farmers' losses have not caused them to stop planting. With the huge investment most farmers carry on their land, buildings and equipment, a substantial cash flow is required. To plant at a loss gives some income to pay off debts. Not to plant means quick death.

As a result, the 1982 crop promises to be the largest ever recorded. Corn is expected to register a modest 1 percent gain over the 1981 record, but soybean estimates are 13 percent higher than last year's.

With such optimistic estimates for grain yields, prices have fallen drastically. The cash soybean price at Minneapolis plummeted 57 cents per bushel to \$5.42 over a 12-day period in August after crop estimates were published. During that time the value of corn and soybeans stored on Minnesota farms fell by \$35 million. And a loss of up to \$250 million befell the crops ripening in state fields. Prices are still heading downward and will only get worse as the crop comes in.

The overall result of record yields combined with low prices is that farmers will hold grain off the market as long as possible, on the chance that prices will recover. This leads the U.S. Department of Agriculture to predict that, after exports, 125 million metric tons of surplus grain will be on hand next year. Government authorities are scrambling to find spare boxcars and barges to hold the surplus, but doubt that sufficient space can be found.

For the nation's farmers, the one-two punch of large surpluses and low prices is a crushing blow. As long as surpluses exist, prices will remain low. And without federal action, there is simply no relief in sight.

*Ken Meter writes regularly about farm issues for several publications.*

## How wartime boom led to peacetime bust

The Great Depression was caused in part by nearly a decade of dismal farm and raw material prices. In the height of the urban prosperity of the '20s, farmers were plagued by low prices and overproduction, just as they are now.

Farmers had thrived during World War I when European farms were devastated and Europe turned to the U.S. for food. As capital flowed in, American farmers invested in new tractors and land. In five years, the number of tractors in use leaped tenfold to 250,000.

Easy credit, expanding markets and new technology had combined to boost U.S. farming. The years 1914-1917 are still considered the prime era of U.S.

farm prosperity.

But the wartime boom led to a peacetime bust. European nations plunged back into the effort of growing their own food again. Foreign capital was diverted back to help Europe rebuild. With the new machinery, farmers were producing huge stockpiles of unwanted food.

Between 1919 and 1921, the price of corn dropped from \$1.52 a bushel to 52 cents. Wheat prices fell from \$2.19 to \$1.03. Net farm income collapsed from \$9.1 billion to \$3.4 billion.

Worse still, this farm decline coincided with an industrial boom. Jobs were being created in urban areas where

money was plentiful. The value of a farm dollar lost ground compared to industrial dollars. Farm purchasing power dropped dramatically. Anxious to attract laborers for booming industrial areas, financial interests were content to have a weak rural economy.

For eight years before the Crash of 1929, wealth and labor were being extracted from rural areas and placed under the command of urban industrialists. When the stock market collapsed, a healthy economy could have recovered. But the producers of new wealth were broke and could no longer keep the economy afloat.

The farm economy did not recover until 1934, when the government enacted programs to ensure a stable high price for farmers. A reserve grain stock was established. With supply held constant, prices could not fluctuate greatly. Low supports held prices near parity. But this program was gradually dismantled after World War II.

—K.M.



# IN THE WORLD

## ISRAEL



At least one of every 10 Israeli adults was at the September 25 rally to back up opposition demands for a thorough investigation of Israel's role in the Beirut massacre.

# Rally in Tel Aviv is a rare show of wartime dissent

By Peretz Kidron

JERUSALEM

ON SEPTEMBER 25 TEL AVIV'S sprawling Kings of Israel Square was a sea of humanity. Countless banners and slogans condemning Israel's complicity in the Beirut massacre were strewn among the crowd. Attendance estimates ranged from 250,000 to 400,000—by any yardstick an impressive turnout for a country whose total population barely exceeds four million.

At least one of every 10 Israeli adults was there to back up opposition demands for a thorough investigation of Israel's role in the Beirut massacre. On top of that, each demonstrator represented several other citizens holding the same view, as indicated by a poll published the following day in the newspaper *Yedioit Aharonot* showing 51 percent of all Israelis favored a full probe.

The rally, and the demonstrations for several days preceding it, was a rare show of unity. The demonstrators included members of the middle-of-the-road Shinui Party, by way of the Labor Party and the Peace Now movement, as well as representatives of the left-wing Committee against the War and ad hoc protest groups of reservists who had fought in Lebanon. All joined in demanding a full-fledged investigation empowered to summon witnesses and take their testimony on oath.

Just one day earlier, the Begin Cabinet had made a desperate last-minute bid to take the steam out of the rally by proposing a one-man inquiry. Although the man nominated for the job was a judge—no less a person than Itzhak Kahan, president of Israel's Supreme Court—an investigation of the type proposed by the government would have lacked the teeth demanded by the opposition. With

growing evidence of official evasion and downright deceit, it was widely doubted whether such a one-handed probe would have uncovered the full truth. Whatever the case, this attempt to head off the opposition campaign floundered when Kahan refused to consider the nomination, claiming that since his court was already renewing two petitions for a judicial commission, the issue was *sub judice*, and he was therefore barred from responding.

The gesture to Kahan backfired painfully. Instead of reassuring public opinion, it caused more indignation. Instead of proving the government's good faith, it heightened suspicions that the authorities have something to hide. Instead of eroding participation at the rally, the government's abortive move probably convinced numerous people that they should show up.

Consequently, the crowd at the rally

included many thousands of Israelis not usually associated with Labor, to say nothing of more dovish movements such as Peace Now or other active antiwar groups. Particularly noticeable were the large numbers of men sporting the yarmulka of the Orthodox—traditional supporters of Begin's Likud or one of its coalition allies.

Spreading far beyond the reach of the opposition parties and their active members, the demand for a full investigation was taken up by groups and individuals who do not usually engage in political controversies. Among the first to voice the demand was figurehead President Yitzhak Navon, and he was followed closely by national association of writers, lawyers and teachers, by more than 200 scientists at the prestigious Weizmann Institute of Science at Rehovot and by a group of retired diplomats, to name but a few. Even outspoken supporters of the Begin government backed the demand, and dissension reached the Cabinet level when Energy Minister Itzhak Berman resigned in protest of the government's refusal to authorize a judicial inquiry.

### Unprecedented outcry.

In view of this unprecedented outcry, it remains a mystery why Begin adamantly set his face against a judicial commission for more than a week while simultaneously insisting there was nothing to conceal. Although he had no lack of oppor-

*Bodies of Palestinians killed in the refugee camp of Sabra lie in the middle of a road as civil defense workers prepare to remove them.*



tunities to explain his position—in the Knesset or to the media—the prime minister offered nothing approaching a convincing reason for his refusal. Begin may have been sincere in his frenetic protestations that the accusations being flung at the authorities constituted “a blood libel” in which the domestic opposition is in collusion with foreign enemies and anti-Semites. But in that case, as some of his colleagues argued, he should have immediately ordered a credible investigation to prove Israel was innocent of any misdoing or oversight.

If proof of that innocence exists, it has not yet been unearthed. On the contrary, journalists have discovered evidence that indicates senior Israeli officers and officials were aware of the killings long before the Israeli army moved in to halt them and eject the Phalangists from the refugee camps. The rampage lasted about 48 hours—from the evening of Thursday, September 16, to midday Saturday, September 18—and according to the military correspondents of several reputable Israeli papers, news of the massacre reached the Army command and government officials early Friday, September 17, perhaps even late Thursday night.

Indeed, it is inexplicable that neither Israel's military command nor its Cabinet foresaw such a development when they approved—and facilitated—the Phalangists' foray in the camps. In view of the Phalangists' record of random killings and their undisguised hatred of the Palestinians, it would have been a miracle if they'd behaved differently. Even if official protests of innocence are credible, the Israeli authorities stand indicted of a short-sighted naivete bordering on the criminal.

On top of this weight of condemnatory evidence directly connected to the massacre, Israeli leaders are equally suspect of disseminating falsehoods aimed at misleading their own people no less than confusing the world. Interviewed on Israeli television, Defense Minister Ariel Sharon cheerfully admitted that Israel's professed intention in entering West Beirut—to “maintain order” after the assassination of Lebanese President-elect Bashir Gemayel—was “camouflaged” for the true purpose: a search-and-destroy mission against remnants of the Palestine Liberation Organization forces left in the city's Palestinian quarters.

Faced with this appalling record, even outspoken champions of the government find it difficult to defend. Last week most Begin apologists maintained an embarrassed silence while the stage was dominated by the prime minister's critics.

Yet despite the wealth of evidence against them, Begin and his colleagues are far from finished. And in spite of the upsurge of criticism from the opposition, government spokespersons are probably correct in attributing it to a minority.

## Many who don't normally take an active part in politics were there to protest.

That minority is vocal and angry—it has even made some limited inroads into parts of Begin's traditional constituency—but nevertheless it remains a minority at the time of this writing.

While many Israelis are outraged at the Lebanon war and its consequences, Begin retains the allegiance of broad sections of Israeli opinion. Even after bowing to the storm and appointing on September 28 the judicial commission as demanded by the opposition, Begin can still achieve his revenge. In spite of everything that has happened, he retains one last trump: his enormous personal popularity.

He may play his ace by calling early elections. Chances are better than ever that he will come out on top.

Peretz Kidron is a stringer for National Public Radio.



## UNITED STATES

## America's role in the Beirut massacre



By Claudia Wright

WASHINGTON

**A**S NEW INFORMATION unfolds every day about the Beirut massacre of Palestinian refugees, it is increasingly clear that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) played a greater role in the events than originally reported. Now, more than two weeks after the massacre, it is generally acknowledged that the IDF was at least an accomplice to the killings committed by the Phalangists and other Christian militiamen.

But little has been reported about the U.S. role in the events of September 16-18. Yet evidence indicates that U.S. officials have not been telling the truth about what they knew, when they knew it and what they did about it.

**When did news of the massacre really reach Washington?**

Although the U.S. press has concentrated on Israeli involvement in the massacre, several Arab officials have alleged that U.S. officials knew of the killings earlier than they have admitted and did nothing to stop them. In response to these charges, the State Department issued this statement on September 23:

"On Friday, September 17, we started to receive fragmentary information that something was amiss in the Shatila/Sabra refugee areas of Beirut. We did our best to find out what was happening. It was not until Saturday morning, September 18, that an embassy official was able to enter the Shatila camp and observe directly the evidence of the massacre. A report of this eyewitness account was sent to the State Department and received at around

0500 EDT [5:00 a.m. Washington time] the same day. In short, we had no advance warning."

But this statement omits key factors and sidesteps some serious questions about U.S. complicity.

• As early as Thursday night, September 16, certain U.S. officials knew that something was wrong in the refugee camps. The National Security Agency and the CIA had monitored an IDF radio broadcast at midnight (6:00 p.m. Washington time) announcing the Phalangist operation. The broadcast reported, "The intention is that the IDF will not operate tonight to purge the area of Sabra and Shatila and the nearby refugee camps... It was decided to entrust the Phalangists with the mission to carry out their purging operations."

According to recent U.S. press reports, one of the planners of the operation was Elias Hobeika, chief of Phalangist security and intelligence, and a liaison between the Phalangists and the CIA and U.S. embassy in Beirut.

## Evasion on a large scale

**What is an atrocity at the State Department?**

In a September 26 appearance on NBC's *Meet the Press*, Nicholas Veliotis, the assistant secretary of state in charge of the Mideast, was asked what he knew of "other atrocities" in Lebanon—specifically, whether he knew of the removal by the Israelis of "large numbers of

## Yasir Arafat claims the U.S. had guaranteed protection of the Palestinian refugee camps.

• By early Friday afternoon, Arab diplomats had alerted State Department officials to the possibility of mass killings. At 1:39 p.m. the Washington Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) office received this message from PLO leader Yasir Arafat: "Current reports indicate that the militia of [Maj.] Saad Haddad [commander of Israeli-aligned forces in southern Lebanon] have entered the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Shatila. This

Lebanese and Palestinians" who in the week following the Sabra and Shatila killings were arrested in Beirut and taken South.

"As far as you know, are these reports true, and does the U.S. intend to do anything about them?" asked a journalist.

Veliotis answered with the same style of carefully worded evasion used by the State Department in dealing with the refugee camp massacres: "We have heard varying reports about interrogations and, if you will, deportations of people from West Beirut, males. We have not been able to verify that there

very dangerous development could result in a mass massacre of Palestinian civilians remaining in the camps."

This message was quickly relayed to Arab diplomats and dispatched to the State Department. Mid-afternoon that same day, a State Department official told Arab representatives that the U.S. embassy in Beirut had been informed of the concerns raised in the memorandum. He then said that an embassy official had been to the area outside of the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. He reported that the official had been prevented from entering the camps by Israeli soldiers. The official returned to the embassy and reported back to Washington that he had seen nothing.

**What role did the U.S. embassy play in the events?**

• IDF movements during the afternoon of Wednesday, September 15, could be seen from the U.S. embassy. On both Thursday and Friday evenings, flares fired over the refugee camps by Israeli gunners and pilots were visible from the embassy as well. It is not known whether the embassy relayed this information back to Washington.

• According to *New York Times* correspondent Thomas Friedman, on Friday a group of American journalists "happened to stop by the embassy around 3:00 p.m. ... In the exchange, one of the journalists mentioned that he had heard rumors the Phalangists had entered the Shatila camp. Robert Barrett [the number two man at the embassy], who was in Baabda [the residence of Lebanon's president], was immediately alerted."

• Earlier that day, Barrett had met with Lebanese Prime Minister Shafiq al-Wazzan at Baabda. After the meeting Wazzan told the Voice of Lebanon radio that Barrett had "conveyed a message from Washington on its stand, confirming its commitments and its insistence on the requisite withdrawals being effected." He then told Voice of Lebanon, "Naturally, I am confident that the U.S. will continue to exert this pressure until matters return to normal."

According to Arab sources who talked to Wazzan after the meeting, he and Barrett both knew that some people had been killed at the camps the night before (Thursday). Both men also knew how dangerous the situation was for the Palestinians. According to the Arab sources, Barrett informed Washington by cable with Wazzan.

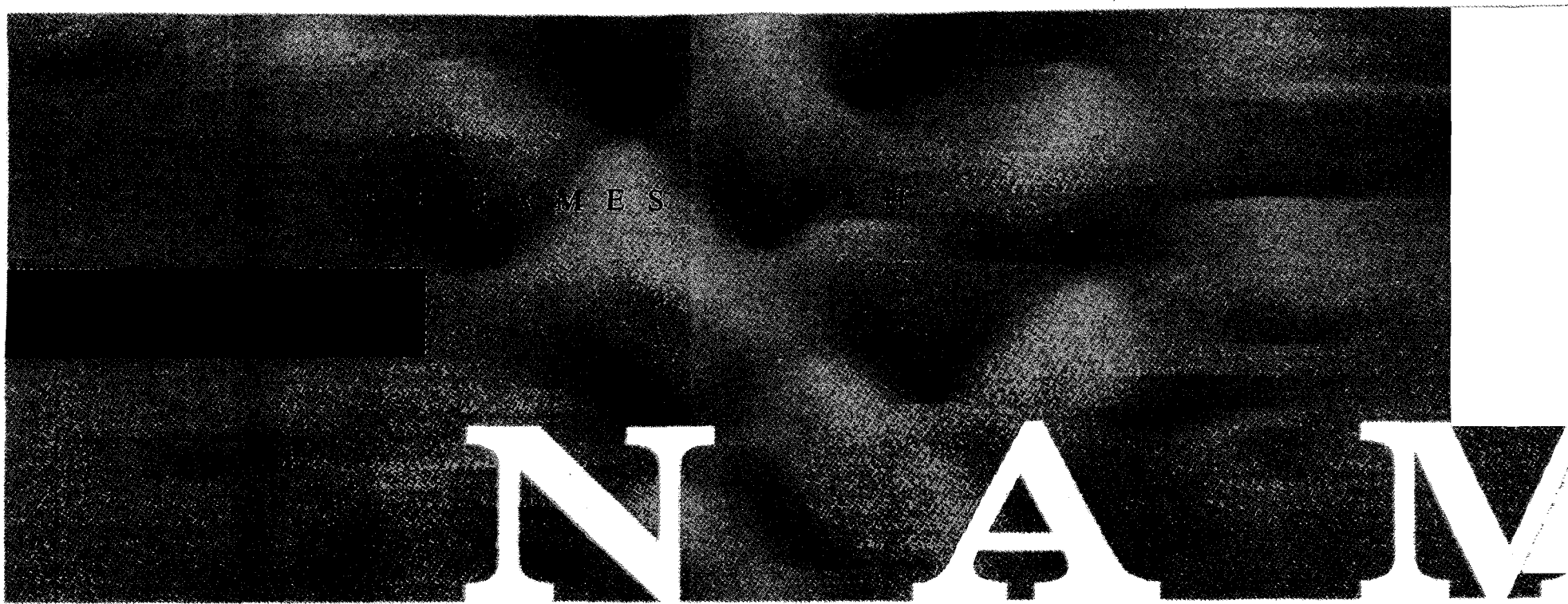
• By Friday afternoon, U.S. embassy officials were making efforts to deal with the militiamen in the camps. According to *Washington Post* correspondent Loren Jenkins, a U.S. official (Barrett, according to other sources) called Amin Gemayel (Bashir Gemayel's brother and now the president of Lebanon) at 4 p.m. that day to see if the militiamen in the camps were Phalangists who answered to him. The embassy official asked Gemayel if he could make the militiamen leave the camps. Gemayel said that he would look into it. According to Jenkins, Gemayel called the embassy official back a few

*Continued on page 22*

have indeed been large-scale movements of males from West Beirut to the south by the Israelis. I'm not excluding this. It's just that we have made our inquiries, and we have been unable to obtain information that would verify any large-scale movements to the south.... We have asked the Israelis about the reports ... the answer we have received is that, yes, there have been interrogations, and, yes, there were large numbers of people held, but that most of these people were released, the implication being that very few of these detainees were actually taken away."

—C.W.





#### WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

THE BENGUELA CURRENT, FLOWING up the southwest coast of Africa, churns up icy cold Antarctic water from the ocean depths, cooling the air above. Offshore, a steady high-pressure zone forces warmer air downward toward the African coast. The warm air traps the cooler air beneath it and prevents rain clouds from condensing.

The result is one of the world's most barren deserts, the Namib, which stretches hundreds of miles along the coast. The desert is a curiosity because interaction among cold water and warm and cool air creates mist—a blanket of salty moisture that envelopes the burnt orange sand dunes. The air feels wet, but it never rains.

The Namib will one day give its name to an independent Namibia, a country that is also a curiosity. Just over a million people are scattered in a territory twice the size of California. Half of them live in a narrow band along the Angolan border, the only region in the country with enough rainfall to grow crops.

The emptiness is overwhelming on the 200-mile drive east from the coastal town of Swakopmund to Windhoek, the capital. The road passes through only a cou-

ple of towns—raw, dusty frontier places where ragged black children offer to wash cars that rarely stop. Otherwise, the country is desolate.

At the coast there is no vegetation, only stretches of white and orange sand. Further inland, scrubby plants start to appear, increasing in frequency until the landscape is an undulating sea of thornbushes, of only marginal value as grazing land. Windhoek appears unexpectedly, a large town carved out of the hills.

Namibia is unusual in other ways. The territory was originally colonized by Germans and their influence is present in many buildings. The steep roofs, designed to shed northern hemisphere snows, are incongruous in the dry desert air. German-speaking people today are about 25 percent of the white population, and Windhoek and the other towns have beer gardens, wiener schnitzel and clandestine remnants of the Nazi Party. The main thoroughfare in Windhoek is called Kaiser Street. German missionaries introduced 19th century dress to the Herero people, and some of the women still glide about in billowing, floor-length print dresses with headgear to match.

Afrikaans-speaking people predominate among Namibian whites, and there is also a small contingent of English-

A Namibian refugee just after escaping from fierce fighting in the far north section of the territory.

speakers. All three groups of whites are considered one for political purposes, while the 11 black groups are legally separated in the South African regime's vigorous attempts to divide and rule. Some of the black groups speak languages that are unrelated. They have to communicate in the territory's *lingua franca*—Afrikaans. The South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) has therefore the distinction of being the world's only Afrikaans-speaking liberation movement.

SWAPO's armed wing, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia, has an estimated 6,000 to 8,000 guerrilla soldiers in the field. Against them, the South African military has deployed a giant expeditionary force of 100,000 troops, an increase of 40,000 in the last three years. Despite these overwhelming odds, SWAPO has steadily expanded its war efforts. The conflict has doubled in intensity in each of the last three years, and at least 5,000 people have died, most of them Namibian and Angolan civilians and some SWAPO soldiers. This death toll has prompted little world concern.

A central fact in Namibia today is that SWAPO is enormously popular and would win any fair election. This is acknowledged even by far-right political parties, which oppose an internationally supervised settlement precisely because SWAPO would win.

In recent weeks, Western optimism about the prospects for a settlement has reached new heights, unparalleled since 1978. Neither SWAPO nor most people inside the territory share those sunny feelings. Still, Namibia's anomalous position in international terms—it is officially a ward of the United Nations (UN), but a de facto South African colony—has created a national pastime: speculating about a settlement.

The Reagan administration is hoping for a triumph here to restore some credibility to its foreign policy, which may explain the wishful sounds emanating from Washington. But the optimism does not fully recognize the terrible bind in which the South African regime is caught. It entered the negotiating process a decade ago in an entirely different regional climate. Angola was a Portuguese colony, and Ian Smith ruled in Rhodesia, while SWAPO constituted almost no military threat. Then, Pretoria may have reasonably assumed it could construct a puppet movement in the territory and guide it to power, putting an end to UN criticism without jeopardizing its own strategic and economic interests.

#### A puppet alliance.

Everything has changed. The ring of white-ruled states has collapsed. SWAPO's strength is universally recognized. The puppet is a ragtag circus called the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance. It has one ring for each ethnic group and the ringmaster is a bullying, wealthy white farmer called Dirk Mudge, but the party

is disintegrating. South African Prime Minister P.W. Botha is apparently unhappy with the Alliance's ability to present a viable alternative to SWAPO, and in a September 23 speech Botha demanded that the Namibian parties "get their priorities right." He implied that the National Assembly, which is dominated by Mudge's Alliance, would be recast when its term ends in November. In South Africa itself, the ruling National Party faces stiff opposition from the two parties to its right.

But South Africa is still trapped in the negotiating process it entered 10 years ago. It would like the talks to fail in such a way that SWAPO would be blamed. Barring that, its only tactic is to continue stalling, using any of several excuses. The presence of Cuban troops in Angola is presently the chief one. Only the threat of Western-endorsed economic sanctions will force Pretoria to stop procrastinating, and the regime has called that bluff before.

But settlement is not out of the question. It is possible that the West could threaten sanctions, while perhaps simultaneously offering Pretoria certain positive inducements, not all of them public. In such a circumstance, no one would be more pleased than SWAPO, which suffers from an unpublicized and particularly brutal war.

Most of the actual fighting is confined to the 100-mile zone along the Angolan border, a flat area that is the only part of the territory outside the towns with a reasonable population density. The fighting occasionally spills over to a more sparsely populated white ranching area just to the south. More commonly, the South Africans launch repeated raids into southern Angola, devastating whatever they can. The most recent invasion was announced in mid-August—just as the news from the diplomatic front started to sound dangerously positive to Pretoria.

Press access to the "operational area" is severely limited. The *Windhoek Observer's* crusading editor Hannes Smith has managed to penetrate the secrecy somewhat by reporting on court inquests into certain questionable combat deaths. His newsweekly frequently chronicles the war's horror, such as civilians dying merely because they break the dusk-to-dawn curfew and walk into ambushes prepared by nervous, frightened South African soldiers. In one case that came to light in late July, two black farmers were killed by 30 submachine guns and a hand grenade tossed afterward for good measure. In another, two women with babies strapped to their backs also died. In both inquests, and in other similar cases, the magistrate exonerated the soldiers, finding that they had acted "in a bona fide manner in campaigning against terrorism."

The court evidence, which only deals with a tiny fraction of the deaths, is corroborated by Namibians connected with religious missions, dotting the combat area. One ranking Anglican church official said, "Not a day goes by in the north without another hut invaded, another person beaten up by the South African soldiers." In a report released th...



## Independence hopes fade, while the fighting escalates

# NAMIBIA

May, a delegation of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference who had visited the war zone condemned South African atrocities and called for a swift military withdrawal.

This testimony, however unpleasant, is characteristic of other guerrilla struggles around the world. But South Africa has in one respect gone even beyond previous standards of barbarism: It apparently does not take prisoners. The regime admits that it has killed more than 4,000 SWAPO guerrillas and another 600 civilians. Sources in the Windhoek legal community estimate there are only perhaps 200 people in prison camps in the entire country. An International Red Cross representative who visited some of them last year said, "It simply does not happen in any conflict or battle that you have a clash with 200 or so people in which 45 are killed and no prisoners or wounded taken."

Of course, the regime attributes all atrocities to SWAPO, from whom it says it is protecting the local population. It is really only protecting a handful of collaborators and informers, to whom SWAPO apparently issues warnings before attempting to assassinate them. In truth, the particular viciousness of the war has undoubtedly provoked some SWAPO atrocities. In one celebrated case in 1978, two guerrillas butchered two white children in the northern ranching district. One guerrilla was killed in action, but the other made it to safety in Angola. Later, the Angolan radio announced SWAPO had executed him.

### Waiting for destiny.

To the south of the war zone, the atmosphere is peaceful and marked by a curious sense of resignation, as if people have accepted they are spectators for the time being. There is a feeling among both blacks and whites in Windhoek that the territory's destiny is being decided in distant world capitals and the northern war zone.

It was not always so. SWAPO has existed since 1960, but the movement made one of its biggest advances during a huge nationwide strike it helped coordinate in 1971. The South African regime had installed a system of Bantustans—modeled after its own—in which blacks were restricted to certain rural areas. They were allowed to leave these zones only as single migrant workers. Two-thirds of Namibian workers were migrants, a percentage higher than even South Africa's and probably unequaled anywhere.

The 1971 strike made the migration system itself the issue, with less emphasis on wages and working conditions. At least 13,000 and probably closer to 20,000 strikers demanded to be repatriated from the mines, farms and factories in the "white" heartland back to their homes. There, they realized, they had access to their own food—and therefore a better chance to win the strike. They did get some concessions, although the migrant labor system continues. More important, they demonstrated an invigor-

ating cohesiveness that gave an enormous boost to the liberation movement.

But labor activism and other community-based protests are a thing of the past. The apartheid regime never banned SWAPO internally, and a brave band of men and women even maintained an office for the movement in Windhoek until 1979. Now stiff police repression, including torture, has reduced overt protest to nothing.

One particularly clever decree requires the organizers of any public demonstration to sign a declaration condemning violence; this would force the internal wing of SWAPO to repudiate its own guerrilla soldiers. Widespread unemployment has also contributed to the lull. The National Union of Namibian Workers reportedly exists quietly underground.

With great fanfare, the regime abolished some features of petty apartheid in

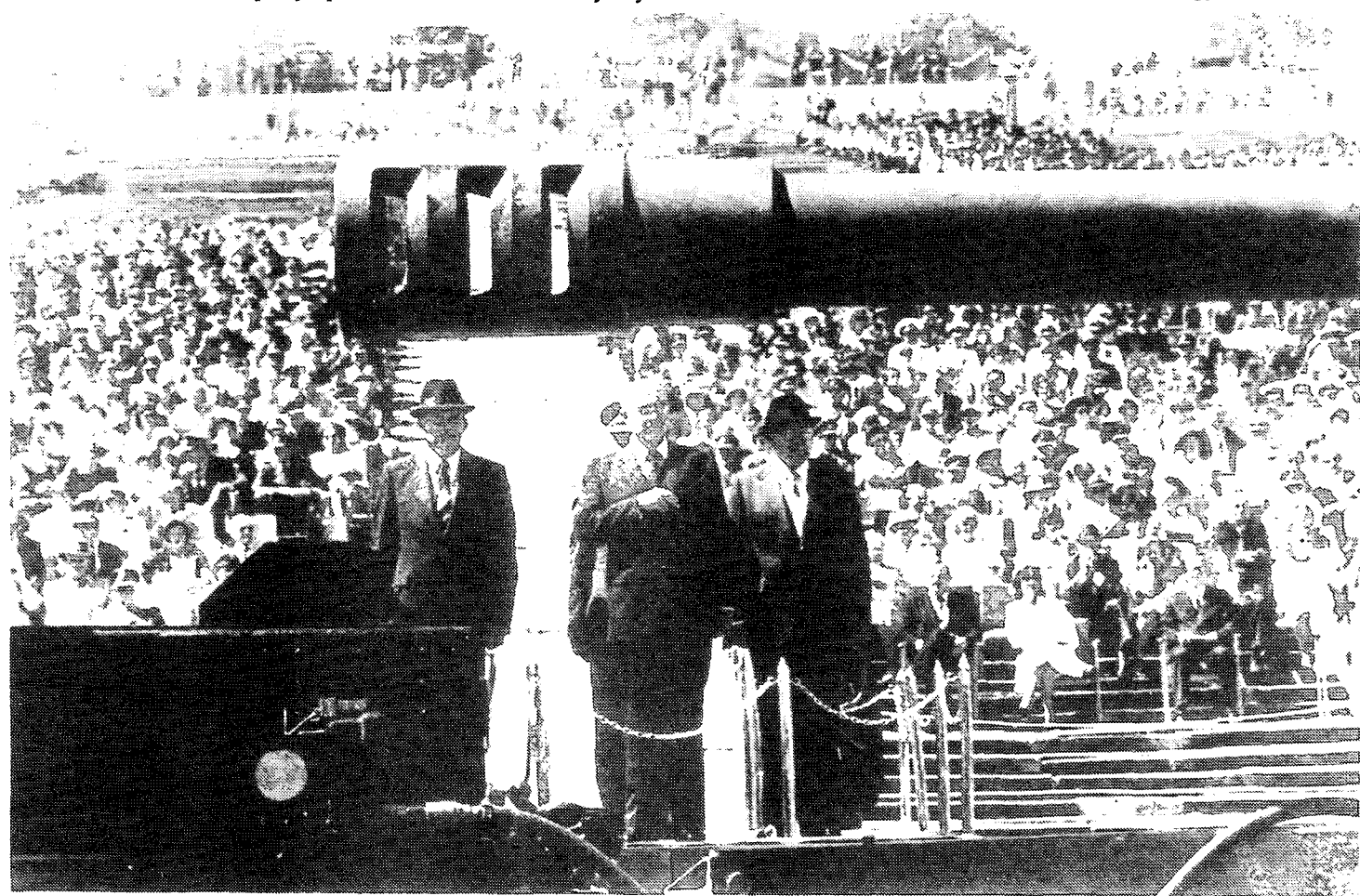
### SWAPO strategy.

SWAPO's present strategy seems to be to inflict increasingly heavy losses on the South African army in order to weaken morale in South Africa and increase pressure for a settlement. SWAPO guerrillas hit directly at the enemy, rather than planting bombs or cutting rail lines around the country. The strategy has had some effect. At least 235 South African soldiers have been killed, including 15 who died simultaneously when SWAPO shot down a Puma helicopter in mid-August. This figure is penetrating white South African consciousness and prompting doubts, particularly since the regime says it plans to relinquish control of Namibia anyway.

Africa has winked as these corporations continue to plunder the territory of diamonds, uranium and other metals, while subject to little supervision and enjoying huge tax breaks.

Such enterprises, which include the Tsumeb Corporation, controlled by American Metal Climax (AMAX), are theoretically violating UN resolutions on Namibia by exporting. In practice, the corporations have embedded themselves so deeply in the Namibian economy—the two largest account for almost half of its gross domestic product and three-quarters of its export value—that a SWAPO government may find it impossible to quickly dislodge them.

Within SWAPO there seems to be a fairly broad spectrum of social-economic opinion. But the continuing power of South Africa and the multinationals will dictate a moderate strategy if the move-



South African Prime Minister P.W. Botha reviews part of the gigantic apartheid military machine in Pretoria.

the late '70s, but not much has changed. Restaurants and hotels are integrated, but schools and hospitals are not. In theory, residential areas are desegregated, but only a handful of blacks can afford to move out of the township of Katutura.

The Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, South Africa's stand-in, promised sweeping reform to lure blacks away from SWAPO. But the half-hearted charade has cost the Alliance much of its black support. At the same time, it has moved too fast for the whites, the majority of whom back parties to the right. How whites would react to a settlement and SWAPO election victory is difficult to gauge. Some—the better-off merchants and ranchers—would probably stay and try to adjust. Others would leave quietly, and still others would wage a serious right-wing terror campaign.

The irony is that even after independence South Africa and its multinational allies would retain powerful economic controls with which they could frustrate SWAPO reform efforts. The major fetter is Walvis Bay, the territory's only deep-water port. South Africa, by virtue of a 19th-century British claim, will retain sovereignty over the enclave. The frontline states, anxious for a settlement, have pressured SWAPO to defer its own claim until after independence. Meanwhile, South Africa is tightening its control over the port, a dreary place with a pervasive, nauseating stench of fishmeal factories. For example, Namibian workers are being replaced with blacks from South Africa in an obvious effort to tighten the South African stronghold.

South Africa also owns other elements of the infrastructure, such as the electricity utility and the railroad. The large mines—the backbone of the economy—are owned by huge multinationals. South

ment is to achieve any political power in the near future. Namibia is only another and extreme example of the central truth in the region: Radical change in South Africa is a precondition for genuine, full independence of the neighboring states.

Still, the sooner SWAPO achieves at least political power the better—if for no other reason than to stop the killings. The West's motives in pushing for a settlement are partly expedient; a prolonged war would further radicalize SWAPO and threaten Western economic interests, at least in the long run. Its negotiating efforts still deserve success. If they fail, South Africa may set in motion another solution to this Namibian dilemma—to simply kill so many people that SWAPO disintegrates.

This "final solution" is feasible, given Namibia's low population base. It has been explicitly discussed in South African government circles. In the first decade of

*Continued on page 23*



## EDITORIAL

*Nothing fails like excess*

"Our government, like all our people," said Israel Defense Minister Ariel Sharon on September 22, "is sensitive to acts of terror, more so than any other government or any other people in the world." As if to prove his point, Sharon went on to say that the Israel Defense Forces "have been performing for three months a wonderful operation in Lebanon, which had brought and will bring great security gains."

We have argued since Israel invaded Lebanon in June that just the opposite is true, that in fighting the racism of anti-Semitism, Begin and Sharon were employing an anti-Palestinian racism every bit as virulent; that in opposing past terrorist acts by Palestinians, they were engaging in a greater terrorism against the Palestinian people as a whole; and that in attempting to destroy Palestinian hopes for a state of their own on the West Bank, they were isolating Israel from the community of nations and threatening their own security.

The latest atrocity, the massacre in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, is no accidental occurrence. As the *New York Times* acknowledged (September 26), Yasir Arafat's main concern in agreeing to leave Beirut was for the safety of the thousands of Palestinian civilians who were left behind without PLO protection. And as Lebanon's former Prime Minister Saeb Salam repeatedly argued, the refugees' safety could be guaranteed only if

ernment with that of the Israeli people. The September 25 rally in Tel Aviv proved that. One of the several hundred thousand protesters, Dov Malmann, who had come to Palestine from Poland 50 years ago, and who said he had never before taken part in a protest, said he was there "because I want this government to go.... I came to Israel and worked for it to be a sign for the whole world. Now I'm ashamed for what we've done." The in-

verse the aggressive military policies of recent years and to reach an accommodation with the Palestinians. This will require three things: the recognition by the Arab states of Israel's right to live in peace within secure borders; the recognition of the PLO as the only true representative of the Palestinian people; the establishment of Palestinian sovereignty in the West Bank and Gaza.

We have consistently advocated this

partners in his federation would "maintain their respective identities and exercise their right of self-determination." In context, that can only mean an eventual Palestinian state led by the PLO.

Meanwhile, Hussein says the eight-point program adopted by the Arab League in Fez, Morocco, in September was based on UN Security Council Resolution 242 (which called for an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and the right of all states in the area to live within secure and recognized borders), and a senior White House official said on September 24 that there is a "very good chance" Hussein will enter negotiations with Israel over the West Bank and



*A mass protest movement during a successful war is rare. For it to occur in Israel is extraordinary.*

Israeli tanks and Phalangist militiamen were kept out of West Beirut. U.S. State Department officials affirm that such assurances were an integral part of the agreement negotiated by special U.S. envoy Philip C. Habib. Everyone knew of the danger of a massacre before Israeli troops entered Beirut and opened the refugee camps to the Phalangists.

Yet the American, French and Italian troops pulled out of Lebanon, Israeli troops moved into West Beirut in violation of the truce agreement and, as Sharon admits, he allowed Phalangist troops to enter the refugee camps to root out "terrorists." Given that Begin and Sharon have consistently seen all Palestinians as terrorists—"two-legged beasts" in Begin's term—the result should not have surprised either of them. Sharon, though, denies responsibility and insists that "the hands of the IDF are clean," and the "purity of arms was preserved" in Sabra and Shatila, "just as it was throughout the war."

And, of course, he is correct. The main difference between Sabra and Shatila and the rest of the war is that there the killing of old men, women and children was done one by one, by rifle or pistol shots and stabbings, rather than being one step removed, as it was in the bombings and shellings that killed thousands during the "wonderful operation" of the past three months.

But, fortunately, Sharon is dead wrong when he equates the sensitivity of his gov-

vasion of Lebanon, he said as others nodded in assent, was "an aggressive war. I want to change the whole thing and show the world we're not spiritually dead." This sentiment has been widely expressed in Israel these past two weeks.

A successful anti-government movement is almost unprecedented during or immediately after a successful war, and that such a massive protest movement should spring up in a country like Israel, which has been besieged for much of its short history and has been permeated with a siege mentality, is truly extraordinary. But the Tel Aviv rally, the largest anti-government demonstration in Israeli history, is clearly the beginning of a movement that has the potential to re-

solution, and it seems now that events are relentlessly, if unevenly, moving in this direction, despite the fact that President Reagan's proposal for a Mideast settlement rejected the idea of an independent Palestinian state and did not recognize the PLO. We say this because Reagan's inclusion of King Hussein and Jordan have indirectly opened the door to both. Hussein, who will meet with Arafat this month, has called for a Palestinian-Jordanian federation that would conduct a plebiscite after Israel withdraws from the occupied territories. He has not specified how this differs from Reagan's proposal for a Palestinian-Jordanian "association" or from the Palestinians' call for an independent state. But he says the two

Gaza with Arab League support. This opinion, the official said, was based on intensive behind-the-scenes meetings with various Arab leaders since the Fez summit. In short, Hussein is preparing to meet with the Israelis, he is working out a formula for Palestinian self-determination in the occupied territories under PLO leadership and the other Arab states, who are preparing to accept Security Council Resolution 242, are likely to join him. All that is now needed to move toward a settlement is a government in Israel that will accept the Reagan proposal as a starting point for negotiations.

A month ago that would have seemed impossible. Now, Begin's war in Lebanon may have made it possible.

*Reagan double standard strikes railway union*

On September 22, four days after President Reagan requested legislation to end the strike of railroad engineers that had interrupted passenger and freight service in most areas of the country (except those in the Northeast and Midwest served by Conrail, which already had an agreement with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers [BLE]), the House followed the Senate and directed the 26,000 strikers to return to work under a new contract. The strike had been called in defense of the BLE's traditional 15 percent pay differential over other rail unions.

We are not strong defenders of fixed pay differentials. And we understand the feelings of the AFL-CIO that with the economy in such damaged conditions "an extended strike could only damage

it further," which led them not to oppose the congressional action. Yet it is important to note that this is one more example of Reagan's willingness to use the power of the federal government to move against organized labor "in the public interest" in a way that he would not do against business when its actions are detrimental to the public welfare.

When corporations act against the public interest, when they destroy our natural environment, pollute our air and water or waste billions of dollars in mergers and takeovers rather than using the money productively, Reagan cheers them on. The pursuit of private corporate gain is what he conceives to be the highest "public interest." But he does not hesitate to impose on working people conditions of

work that they deem unsatisfactory and that they seek to improve through their unions.

In both the PATCO strike of 1981 and in the current strike Reagan could have sent the strikers back to work by intervening on their behalf—by granting their demands or requesting that Congress do so legislatively. Yet simply to make such a suggestion is to make clear how unrealistic it is. When corporate profitability is the question, however, the first—and last—impulse of the government is to protect it.

Of course, this is the nature of capitalism and thus the nature of corporate politicians—whether Reagan conservatives or neo-liberal Democrats. But we see no reason in principle why if an air controllers' strike is to be ended, it can't be ended by granting the air controllers their demands. Or why, if a railway engineers' strike is to be ended, it can't be ended by giving them what they want. Doing so would better serve the true public interest. But only socialist politicians are likely to see it that way.



# LETTERS

*In These Times* is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

## VICIOUS CIRCLE

THE REACTION OF MANY AMERICAN Jews to the invasion of Lebanon is irritating and saddening to many non-Jewish leftists and liberals such as myself. But we who are not Jewish should expect that Jews will so react as long as the Holocaust is remembered and anti-Semitism flourishes. I for one hope that time will bring about a reduction in the military aggressiveness and the political neuroses of the Israelis. The very least that non-Jews can do to bring this about is to oppose anti-Semitism in every way that is non-violently possible.

—George H. Cole  
Menands, N.Y.

## LABELS

PLEASE CANCEL MY SUBSCRIPTION to *In These Times*. Although I am a lifelong socialist and need a socialist newspaper, I cannot support a paper that has allowed itself to become a forum for anti-Semitic rhetoric.

You are well aware of the difference between opposition to the policies of a government, and the vituperation of a people. Particularly despicable has been the description, in articles and letters, of Israel and "Zionists" in the terminology formerly used almost exclusively to characterize the Third Reich.

Having been simultaneously a "Communist Jew" and a "socialist fascist," I doubt that discussions of "Judeo-Nazism" are designed to encourage rational discourse.

—David Finkel  
Carmichael, Calif.

## LIGHT

WE GREATLY APPRECIATED YOUR contrasting movie reviews by D.D. Guttenplan of the two holocaust related films *Genocide* and *Who Shall Live and Who Shall Die* (ITT, Sept. 8).

While it is clear that there has been a consistent trend among both European and American Jewish filmmakers to try to deal with the events of World War II in cinema, there has been a dearth of criticism sensitive to the distinctions between those films that are sensationalist and ultimately demeaning to the victims (and to the audience), and those more subtle and subjective films that can enlighten us by facilitating our participation as film viewers, rather than hitting us over the head with violence, high production values and constant reference to numbers.

Thank you for shedding more light than heat.

—Deborah Kaufman  
Director, Jewish Film Festival  
Emeryville, Calif.

## NO WIN

HERE IS A SMALL GIFT TO KEEP YOU going. I mostly appreciate Diana Johnstone's thoughtful reporting and insightful analysis of the Mideast. I am an American of Arab and Irish heritage and it distresses me that two good peoples, and oppressed peoples, can be so hateful and misunderstanding toward each other. Who stands to gain might be a good question.

Edward Said in his excellent article on Palestine (ITT, Sept. 8) seemed to show the present bankruptcy of the Arab regimes. In their present fight against Israel, they have diverted the attention of their peoples from making things run well in their own countries.

They fight each other, put down rebellions in their own countries and the rich Arabs become caricatures in the world. Lebanon, which was probably the most democratic of the countries, although muddled by anarchy the last seven years, has been devastated by the invasion.

What has been the effect on Israel? It is more isolated than it has ever been. It has become a ghetto with those inside having a ghetto mentality that is, "They are against us and do not understand us." The Israelis have a hard time hearing the voices from the outside, and there is much fear and criticism inside. At the same time, Israel is perceived by many Third World countries as the symbol of oppression as they support South Africa, El Salvador, Chile and oppress the Palestinians. Their only link is with the United States, which supports them economically.

This is a very dangerous situation for a country, to have one ally. What if there is a rise of anti-Semitism in the U.S.? Israel would be expendable. The U.S. gains much by the unrest in the area by (1) selling arms to both sides, (2) by having the oil cartel divided, and (3) by having a strong-armed, frightened and dependent people to protect U.S. government interests in the Mideast. This needs to be explored further in the search for peace.

—Robert Meadows  
Rochester, N.Y.

## WRONG TARGET

MUCH OF MY ADMIRATION FOR *In These Times* results from its willingness to apply hard-headed analysis to political activity. Yet when it comes to the Citizens Party, usual standards no longer seem to apply. A case in point is Jay Walljasper's item (ITT, Sept. 22) on Kathryn Anderson's campaign against DFL Rep. Martin Sabo in Minneapolis.

To call Sabo's voting record "generally liberal" is an understatement. Sabo has been one of the two or three dozen most consistently liberal members of the House. He has voted against cuts in legal services for the poor and in favor of Medicaid funding for abortions. He supports the moratorium on nuclear power and voted against the Clinch River Breeder Reactor. Perhaps most importantly, he voted last year in favor of the Congressional Black Caucus' alternative budget—one of about 80 to do so.

Nor is Sabo "vulnerable because of his support of increased military spending." He voted against the MX missile and the B-1 Bomber and in favor of the Nuclear Freeze Resolution, and in favor of the Transfer Amendment on several occasions. He was a key vote at one time in committee against appropriations for draft registration.

Anderson was endorsed by the Hennepin County Women's Political Caucus, but this was a dual endorsement. The Caucus also endorsed Sabo. And I wonder what gay rights activists Walljasper has been talking to. As a gay rights activist myself, I know of no significant gay support for Anderson. Martin Sabo has strong support in the Minneapolis gay/lesbian community. He has been an author of the federal gay rights bill, has a 100 percent voting record on gay-related issues and is one of the very few non-gay politicians in Minnesota to include his support for gay rights on general campaign literature.

Kathryn Anderson is a sincere person with a long record of involvement in the peace movement. There are many constructive things she could be doing, but running against Martin Sabo is not one of them. Citizens Party candidacies may make sense where the major parties offer no alternatives, but not against an outstanding left-liberal Democratic incumbent. Left-wingers in Minnesota have several candidates this year with a real chance of winning. ITT has already reported on the campaign of DFL-endorsed populist Paul Wellstone for state auditor, and there are many other legislative and local races that provide for more constructive channels for political energy than Anderson's ill-conceived and utterly futile campaign.

—Allan Spear  
State Senator  
St. Paul, Minn.

*Editor's note: We regret the appearance of passing judgment on Martin O. Sabo's record. Our purpose was to state the Citizens Party's view on this election.*

## COMMON GROUND

THE REFERENCES TO COMMON Ground in your "Briefing" (ITT, Aug. 25) are inaccurate on four key points:

1. Common Ground was not established by "Dallas," but by a dozen grassroots community organizations operating in the inner and southern-city neighborhoods of Dallas.

2. Common Ground is not the result of an ACORN "victory." ACORN played a minor role in the Concerned Citizens Coalition for Southern Dallas (which the other groups founded and participated in). Common Ground was chartered April 26, 1982, with six community groups represented on the initial board of directors. Six more groups were added on July 24th. ACORN was invited to nominate a board member on August 6, and its representative was added to the board on August 13.

3. Common Ground has not received \$565,000. Common Ground is developing a community-based housing program that may be eligible for Community Development Block Grant funding through the city's "Low Cost Homeownership Program"—it is this Low Cost Homeownership Program that is listed as a line item at \$565,000 in the fiscal 1983 CDBG budget here.

4. The city has not "selected nine houses for the program" or any particular number of houses. Common Ground's target for the first year is 10-

12 houses; our initial project involves six structures (houses and duplexes) available to the corporation through the efforts of two East Dallas community groups represented on Common Ground's board.

—Diane Ragsdale  
(Wheatley Place Neighbors)  
President, Common Ground

—John Fullinwider  
(Bois d'Arc Patriots)  
Board Member, Common Ground

—Terry Andrews  
(ACORN)

*Nina Berman replies: I regret any inconsistencies in the article. However, as I never spoke with or heard of either Diane Ragsdale or John Fullinwider or their respective organizations, I can only comment on my discussion with Terry Andrews of ACORN, which dealt with ACORN and ACORN in Dallas.*

*I asked him what advances had been made on the city level and he had told me there was more progress there than with HUD and he said that "we" were able to set up a non-profit housing corporation called Common Ground that will be eligible for city funds. I took "we" to include ACORN. If Common Ground is not a "victory" for ACORN or for the principles that ACORN espouses, then I question why ACORN is sitting on the board.*

*I also asked him how much money the corporation had received; he told me that \$565,000 had been approved and a lot of that will go to abandoned houses. I asked how many houses will be affected; he told me there were nine to date. My notes confirm that figure.*

*I regret any confusion the article caused. Space considerations and the focus on ACORN prevented me from detailing all the community groups elaborated upon in the letter above.*

## FLAT TONGUE

OLIPHANT'S CARICATURE OF MEXICO (ITT, Sept. 15) as a slow, lazy peasant whose only vocabulary is "Ole," "Caramba," "Mexico El Broke" and "Chihuahua, I thin it is time to emigrate again" is astonishingly racist for a socially concerned paper to use. North Americans have enough of these stereotypes and shouldn't be fed more.

Usually an acute cartoonist, I shall be kind to wonder if Oliphant had his tongue in his cheek. If he did, it fell flat.

—Jennifer Schirmer  
Cambridge, Mass.

*Editor's note: We agree, the cartoon was a poor choice.*

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# IN DEPTH

## An interview with Tony Mazzocchi

By Marge Harrison

**A**T 56, TONY MAZZOCCHI draws on 30 years of experience as a political and trade union organizer. In the '60s, as an official in the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW), he gained national attention as the prime mover in the worker safety movement.

Mazzocchi traces the roots of the occupational safety and health movement to Long Island, where, in the '50s and '60s, as a union organizer, he became interested in health threats posed by radiation in the workplace and from nuclear bomb tests. He participated in what Democratic presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson claimed was the first union-community meeting on the need for a nuclear test-ban treaty, in New York, 1957 (the organizing group later became SANE). He himself had organized a Syl-Cor plant in Hicksville, Long Island, that manufactured nuclear bomb fuel elements. It closed as a result of the signing of the test-ban treaty during the Kennedy administration.

In the mid-'60s, drawing upon his acquaintance with scientists like Barry Commoner, and learning as the union's Washington legislative director of chemical contamination problems nationwide, Mazzocchi helped to launch the occupational safety movement.

Mazzocchi served for 12 years as legislative director of OCAW, two years as a vice-president and for two years as health and safety director. He ran twice for the union presidency, losing both times by a narrow margin. He is now a special assistant to the president of District 8, New York-New Jersey, of OCAW.

Currently Mazzocchi is focusing on the "Campaign for Corporate Concessions," which he described in a recent interview at his Institute for Labor Education and Research (ILER) office in New York.

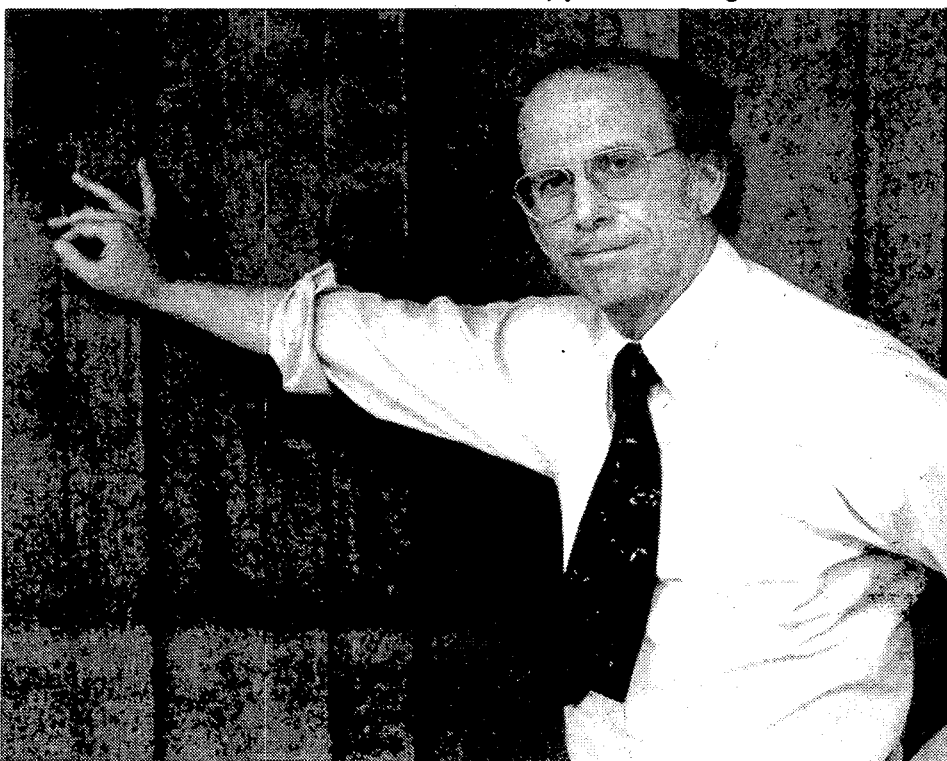
**Are corporations seeking safety give-backs, claiming that costs are too high?** Of course it costs to provide [a clean workplace]. The fight today isn't over reducing costs because you can't reduce the cost. The fight is over "Who shall pay the cost?" The corporations have been successful in saying that workers have to subsidize our operation. And what you have is increased morbidity and mortality. Industry is saying, look,

in order to produce an item, you have to give up years of your life or an appreciable part of your health. The companies aren't confronting the unions on the cost, they are confronting the federal government.

We have tried to identify which agents cause disease, while industry has moved successfully to say that disease is caused by your lifestyle or some other factor.

**How does American occupational health compare with other industrial countries?**

The trade union movement can be criticized in many ways, but it's light years ahead of unions around the world on



Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers leader Tony Mazzocchi wants to change basic assumptions about who controls investment.

this question. Of course, the declining economy has had a chilling effect on health and safety efforts. There's now a climate of fear of plant shutdowns. And with the Reagan administration in the vanguard of dismantling the feeble protections that were established, it's open season on working people and the community.

**How do you deal with resigned acceptance that corporations will have their way?**

Basic assumptions about how things work and don't work have to be changed. Our anti-concession campaign, or, rather, our "corporate concessions campaign" is attempting to change the environment in which people think about these questions. It's a long hard struggle. By doing some basic research we've come up with data saying "We're not the problem." We have nothing to give, and giving it would not solve anything. Now, certain concessions may be necessary. But we're attempting to get people to think in terms of more control over their lives, and that in return certain concessions have to be extracted from corporations. But in other situations there should be absolute resistance to concessions because they don't enhance the economy one iota.

Our "Corporate Concessions Campaign" federal legislative program, which was substantially adopted by the district, calls for a three-year freeze on corporate overseas investment, one-sided corporate investment decisions, further reduction of workers' income, increases in management compensation, hiring more supervisors, unnecessary mergers and unproductive speculation, corporate attacks on affirmative action and corporate price increases.

**Will the programs you've outlined be ac-**

**cepted by the American people?**

People will accept what they understand to be in their best interest. There are no specific models to follow.

Industry has failed. They've had total control and they failed. The country is in a dismal mess with very little hope of extricating ourselves from a depression. Worker control of investments is crucial. Social control of certain investments is crucial.

**What happens to industries that just can't make it in the competitive market, even though workers might be involved in controlling investment decisions?**

Look, I'm not for full employment. Work isn't all that great in our society. I'm talking about full income. If you have a dying industry, it may be that the industry has to die, but the workers and the community can't be the victims. Full income and the viability and vitality of the community must be kept up. Do you think steel workers would really get all that exercised if there was a guaranteed life income or full income during a transitory period? They wouldn't.

We have to civilize our society, which lives by the law of the jungle. Look, it's a real problem. You're a building tradesman, you're working on a nuclear reac-

corporations pay.

But the tax question is one of mechanics. The basic philosophical thrust has to be control. If you try to adjust this economy within the rules as they now exist, we're not going to go anywhere. You save U.S. Steel and it takes its money and buys Marathon Oil.

**One caution people raise about imposing local controls on corporations is that they will simply leave the area.**

Well, they're right. These things can't be done locally. Local communities are trapped. You need rules that affect everyone, a national program. We address the question of the flight of capital—how it harms the American economy.

**Many of your proposals require national legislation. How will that be achieved in the absence of a strong labor political force?**

It's not going to be achieved overnight. Our attempt is to try to change certain basic assumptions. We have to develop a political mechanism coherently to express the direction we need to take.

**What about public employees?**

The basic problem is the economy, and the public sector is going to rise and fall with the rest of the economy. If the economy is moving, and the people have control of their lives, the public sector will certainly benefit as a result.

**What do you think about schemes like re-industrialization that are advanced as cures?**

We're not talking about resurrecting the steel or auto industries. Reindustrialization is a fancy scheme that doesn't say anything. We're talking about having viable industries that produce to meet the needs of the American people.

Now of course some people think that things will recover the way they did in the past, that life will go on as usual. I reject that notion. It's qualitatively different now.

**You don't think that we're heading for another period of boom?**

There's not going to be a boom that brings along working people. We're in for a long period of stagflation. Some corporations may become very profitable employing very few people. We're into a situation of permanent crises as far as working people are concerned.

**You see the need for a labor party. How might it function?**

A labor party has to deal fundamentally and primarily with the problems of working people. If you don't address those problems in the most direct, specific terms, you don't move anything.

To make the type of changes I'm talking about will take a party with a class orientation. Workers know who they are, whether they call themselves middle class or not. They know they work for wages, and that there's an economic life and death existence, subject to corporate will.

The major parties are still corporate captives and although there are some elements—especially within the Democratic Party—we can support, we'd be better off supporting them from outside to change the nature of the debate. I'm not going to kid myself that the Democrats are going to adopt our legislative agenda. People's lives are not going to change one iota if the Democrats get elected and the labor movement doesn't have a coherent direction and a political mechanism to carry it out.

That's why I'm for a labor party. Not so much to run candidates. I'm not big on running candidates. I don't think that's the fundamental task of a party at this point. It must affect the way the debate takes place between the two major parties and the way the candidates react.

**What about the proposal that labor endorse a candidate now for the 1984 presidential election?**

It only makes sense if there's a labor political platform and mechanism. Even if labor elects someone who would be favorable, it goes beyond the power of individuals.

**Marge Harrison teaches in a high school and does political organizing on Long Island.**



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## FICTION

# Tyler's epic recipe is food, love and family

**Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant**

By Anne Tyler  
Knopf, 320 pp., \$13.50

By Paul Skenazy

Amid all the recent rhetoric about families comes this absolutely wonderful novel of domestic life. It is not about "the family in crisis" nor is it an effort at "Middletown rediscovered." It is as far from our capitalized headlines as is the daily life of most Americans. Anne Tyler reveals what passes as love between people over four decades in Baltimore. History is recorded quietly here. We know what is happening in the public arena, but such events only reach the characters in styles of home and dress and fashion, in new games or different cars or the shifting price of vegetables. Their

*All of Pearl's children have become preoccupied with food.*

lives are presented with a love for people and language so rare that I had almost forgotten how moving tales of everyday circumstances can be.

*Homesick Restaurant* tells the story of the Tulis: Pearl, who is dying; Buck, the husband who left her years before; and Jody, Ezra and Jenny, their children. Pearl has never entirely forgiven, or forgotten, Buck. She has supported herself as a check-out clerk in the local grocery, sacrificed her life for the children and rung up her own payments from them. They in turn resent her for their upbringing. Pearl, in death, wonders if there isn't some "statute of limitations" on her failures.

All the children borrow their significance and limits from their unsettling childhood. Jenny is the most flamboyant and confused of the three. Bright, unloved and sad, she becomes a pediatrician and loses herself in an avalanche of children. Cody, handsome and smart, is guilty about his father's departure and jealous of Pearl's special affection for Ezra. He lives for competition and becomes a successful efficiency expert, but his heart battles ineffectively with his immense insecurity. Where Cody is self-conscious, Ezra is almost frantically unaware. He is passive and slow to anger. He remains at home, takes cookbooks to bed and works at a local restaurant. When he inherits the eatery, he tears the darkly elegant furnishings from the walls, opens the kitchen to view, and starts to serve food for the "homesick."

Food becomes the novel's central metaphor. When the children are young, Pearl chooses meals as her moments to erupt with the collected bitterness and unful-

filled tension of her responsibilities. The children become preoccupied by food: Ezra with its preparation and service, Cody with the search for someone he can trust to feed him, Jenny with denial of her appetites. Ezra desperately arranges ceremonial family dinners at the restaurant, each of which ends in catastrophe as one or another person leaves in anger. Dinner together becomes one of those unrealized rituals, a dream of home and love that goes awry amid the clamor and accidents of life. The story of the family is the course of their travels to and from this banquet table.

Tyler lays out this plot in a series of looping chapters, each dominated by one character's point of view, each moving us gradually forward in time while circling back through past events from his or her particular perspective: Pearl, then Cody, then Ezra, then Jenny, and so on. Individual ambitions seep into each other, leaking emotion, greed, envy and love until one's most ardent efforts to separate the identities of each character only confirm the family resemblance.

But this is not a book about how we are doomed by social circumstance or early childhood trauma. Tyler shows the cost of social roles and the frustrations of repressed longing, but the stories are primarily about how people look at and wander through their days. These are people who don't analyze life.

*Anne Tyler has given us a book in which people reveal themselves at Monopoly and shattered marriages hurt but do not prove fatal.*

They do not question who they are. They try to help one another and hurt one another and get the most with the least bother. Life is punishing but not unusually hard. The world is not always ac-

commodating though seldom peculiarly perverse. Many dignities remain amid unrequited dreams.

It's been a long while since a novelist has been able to incorporate love affairs, marriages, work interests, film, TV, song titles, a bit of madness and a lot of passing years into convincing scenes that remind us of how days do slither by in this curious world of ours. Tyler believes that people are interesting and that they become even more interesting in the peculiar substance of language.

It is confirming to read a book in which people reveal themselves at Monopoly, children get bored listening to grown-up talk, shattered marriages hurt but do not prove fatal. If there is such a thing as an epic of the mundane—and there surely should be—this is it. Read it, and discover how nourishing a chicken gizzard can be when seasoned by just the right imagination.

Paul Skenazy teaches in the American Studies program at the University of California, Santa Cruz.



Hein Marcus

## FRANCE

## Spirited left forges a philosophical base

**The French New Left: An Intellectual History from Sartre to Gorz**

By Arthur Hirsh  
South End Press, 253 pp., \$7.00

By Phillip Johnson

French leftists are fortunate to have inherited "autogestion"—the word and the concept if not the reality.

Both word and concept have convoluted histories. The word was coined by '50s leftists to mean worker self-management. It has since become a favorite new left slogan, carried to the barricades in May 1968 and currently symbolizing one side of the vital debate taking place within the ranks of the ruling Socialist Party over decentralization. The concept has been reworked time and again by political thinkers until it has encompassed the entire spectrum of new left demands for power "at the base." "Autogestion" has come to signify the broad struggle against

alienation in all its forms, and to use it is to evoke echoes of all the great French political debates of this century.

It is difficult to read Arthur Hirsh's concise, lucid chronicle of these debates without giving way to a good, old-fashioned American emotion—envy of another's cultural inheritance.

What contemporary French leftists have inherited (to reduce 20th-century French history to one paragraph) is a socialism recast in terms of the younger Marx's theory of alienation, rather than orthodox Marxism's emphasis on class struggle and economic determinism. Hirsh identifies three major contributions to this intellectual reversal. Existentialists insisted on the meaning of each individual's decision to join political struggles. Revisionists (or neo-Marxists) broadened the concept of alienation to include not just exploitation at the point of production but the totality of everyday life under capitalism. And

gauchistes, represented here by Cornelius Castoriadis and Claude LeFort, found the source of alienation in the bureaucratic organization of modern society—whether Marxist or capitalist—advocating instead a state ruled by the workers, rather than for them. This emphasis on alienation in all its forms makes it theoretically possible to synthesize all the tendencies of the French new left—feminism, environmentalism, anti-militarism, self-management and so forth.

*"The beginning of a long fight," reads a poster from the student rebellion in France.*



DEBUT

D'UNE LUTTE

PROLONGEE

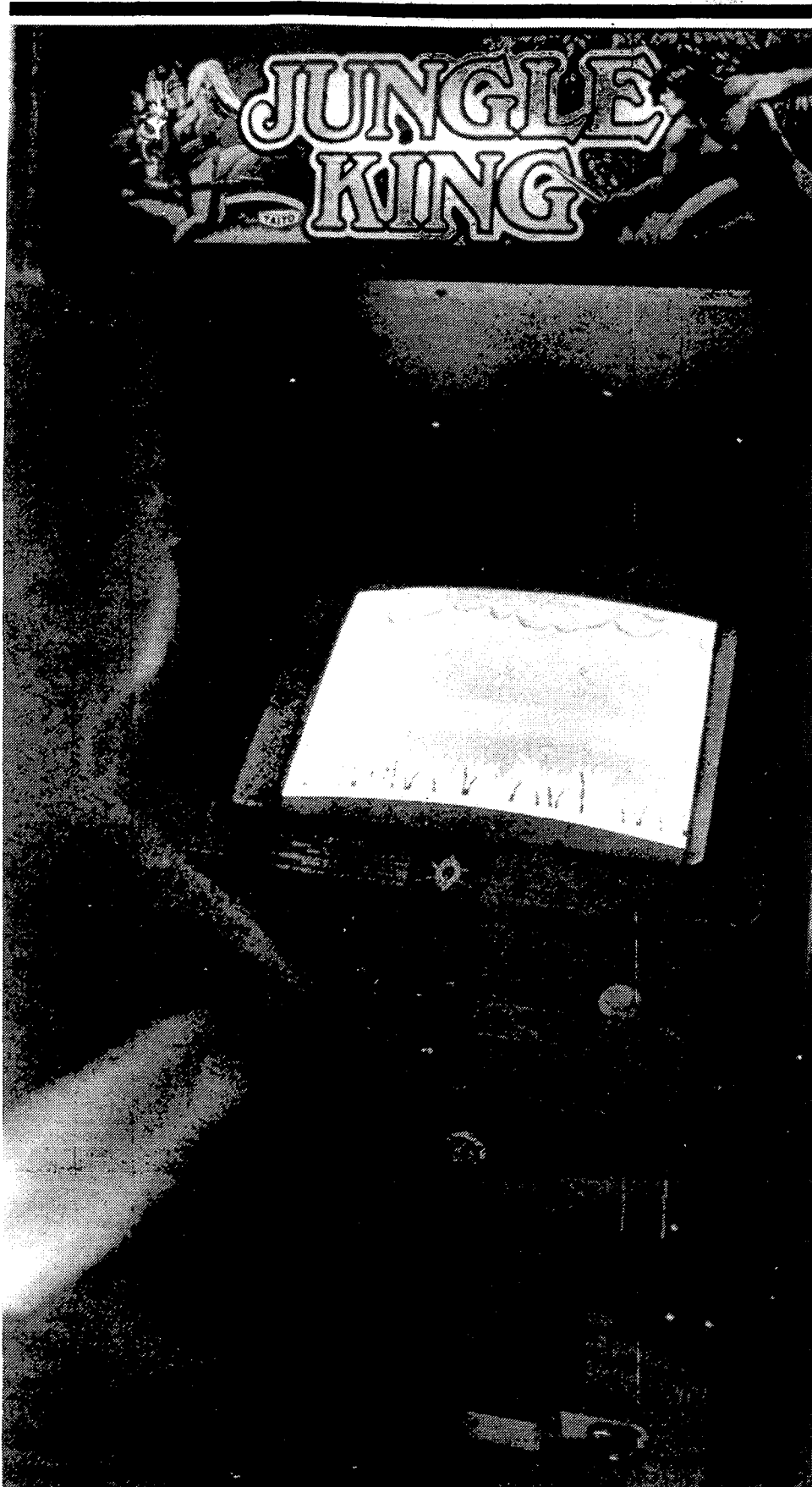
Perhaps the most significant thing about *The French New Left* to an American reader is that there could be no American counterpart. Post-orthodoxy American leftists don't have a shared intellectual history of the sort that Hirsh describes so coherently. We tend to know a great deal about the particular issues that occupy us—nuclear power or herbicides or women's rights or corporate agribusiness. Technical expertise is as valued within the left as it is in mainstream American society. But there is nothing like the ongoing intellectual struggle that Hirsh describes to give our left a distinct identity.

Yet the problems and issues faced by contemporary French leftists are not, in most fundamental respects, different from those that face American activists. Hirsh's book not only tells us how French political thinking developed, but by extension suggests new ways to think about America's fragmented politics. For most American readers, *The French New Left* will serve as a primer in new left political philosophy. For many, it will come as a discovery that "new left political philosophy" is not necessarily a contradiction of terms.

Phillip Johnson writes for a variety of national alternative newspapers.



# LIFE IN THE U.S.



## ARCADE CULTURE

# Today's video kids are striking back at 25 cents a shot

By Jeff Reid

**A**DOLESCENTS DO IT ALONE in the dark. It is bad for their eyes and considered degenerate by many of their elders. Though historically male, this anti-social activity now increasingly engages females. What is this latest assassin of youth?

The video game.

While Political Action Committees (PACs) grab all the headlines with their political pressuring, Pac Man and his silicone-based sidekicks exert considerable economic and cultural clout by gobbling quarters—over \$5 billion worth in 1981. (An amount equal to the combined GNPs of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua.)

Playing video games is a fundamental-

ly American activity, subject to all the contradictions and excesses of the culture. People come to video parlors to assert their individuality and fulfill vague yearnings for group activity. It's just another instance of Americans alone together. Traffic jams, rock concerts, movies, television and video games—Americans flock to these noisy gatherings where they all face one direction and ignore each other.

But video games also show a brighter side of the American experience. They're fun, and there's nothing more American than having fun. The games also reaffirm a longstanding cultural infatuation with complex gizmos and gadgets.

The traditional American celebration of the individual is also at the heart of video. The games merely transpose the mythic American individual—the cowboy—into space or some fantasy loca-

tion. It's high noon in the video saloon and all that stands between civilization as we know it and the forces of evil is one young maverick, who shoots from the hip and lets the micro-chips fall where they may.

It would be easy to dismiss video game players as just punks playing space cowboy, if this intergalactic lawlessness didn't spread to more dangerous segments of society. But this youthful preoccupation with sharpshooting is more than fun and games to the U.S. military. The Army uses a modified version of Atari's Battlezone tank game to train recruits at Fort Eustis, Va.

Many other games have military themes, but Missile Command is perhaps the ultimate shoot-'em-up. It not only allows you to think the unthinkable, but also to live it.

The object of the game is for players to defend their cities from ICBMs. Eventually, however, boredom leads even video aces to surrender to thermonuclear holocaust.

The most popular games with adolescent boys (and males in general) are the war games. A sub-level of fear in these games deals with the dominant adolescent male anxiety.

### Food fantasy.

If most of young men's anxieties center on their potential part in war and nuclear destruction, women seem to have different worries. Women's cultural functions have traditionally been linked to food. Anxieties about food preparation and dieting to preserve a good-look-

## Most of the video games capitalize on deep-seated anxieties.

ing body (as judged by male-dominated cultural standards) are prime causes of female consternation. Into this reservoir of oral anxiety leaps Pac Man, who must eat or be eaten.

In the most popular game among women, Pac Man prepares (cooks?) his food by eating a power pill that changes the formerly menacing creatures into dinner. He can eat as much as he likes and gets fruity, dessert-like incentives for eating more. Best of all, Pac Man never needs to diet—in fact, dieting will prove fatal.

Other popular games also feed on common anxieties. In Centipedes, the aim is to eliminate centipedes, spiders and fleas that run through a field of mushrooms—something most people are happy to do. Many games are at least loosely based on national or species chauvinism, as the player must defend the world against foreign or alien beings.

As sinister as this might sound, there are still those who don't see video as the ultimate bad guy. One is Andrew Collins, director of the Institute of Child Development at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. While no official studies have yet been completed on video games, he said that "from what we know about mass media, the only drawback of video games could be the amount of time spent playing them." But if played in moderation, he said, "video games could even have advantages for adolescents in terms of motor responses and learning complex strategies."

The video craze is probably just a preview of the friendly interaction today's youth will have with computers in the future. This generation is growing up free of the mad scientist nightmares that haunt their parents' thoughts about computers. Still, the older generation's fears may not be entirely irrational.

But the complaints of elders sound a little like the creaking joints of an aging youth movement. The generation that grew up in the '60s viewed itself as the youth movement to end all youth movements. Now it's reacting conservatively to the advances of a younger generation.

Perhaps video games are just the new

generation's answer to the last anti-social assault on youth: rock music. The music industry is no longer the dominant cultural threat it once was. A recent *Rolling Stone* reported that record and tape sales were down as much as 50 percent from last year. Mert Paul of the Music Business Institute in Atlanta, Ga., said that while the *Rolling Stone* story might be a little overstated, the music industry is hurting. He added that "video games eat up a certain amount of disposable income that would otherwise be spent on records."

Even if video games aren't this generation's cultural answer to rock, they are certainly a resounding financial response. Video games gross more than either records or films.

But the film industry isn't sitting idly by while profits are siphoned off into video games. Of the five top-grossing films of all time—*Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, *E.T.*, *the Extra-Terrestrial*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Jaws*—only *Jaws* lacks the deep-space, shoot-out-at-the-Atari-factory quality of video games.

These films and video games share the same audience and both of them depend on repeat customers for their high grosses. The thrill of watching *Raiders* or playing *Space Invaders* is akin to that of a roller-coaster ride: special effects and programed excitement within certain well-defined limits. The thrill is almost a disposable consumer item—at \$4 a ticket or 25 cents a game, a not-so-cheap thrill.

The stock Western characters in these films once again transport the code of the West to the interstellar badlands. Meanwhile, back on planet Earth, the youth of America is buying the same myth a quarter at a time. And there are attempts to merge video games and film even beyond these thematic similarities.

### New age video.

Atari, the leader in the video market and a division of Warner Amex Communications, and Lucas Films, responsible for *Star Wars*, *Empire* and *Raiders*, are engaged in a joint project. Though shrouded in secrecy, this collaboration promises a quantum leap in the quality of video game graphics and also should bring down the cost of movie special effects.

But this movie/video marriage has already been consummated by Disney Studios with *Tron*, though it's not the most successful union on record. Disney had hoped to promote the film with the video game *Tron*, or at best provide a one-two blockbuster punch. But the movie—about a video-game designer trapped in a computer battling his own creations—is a minor flop at the box office. The movie isn't a total failure, though, since *Tron* is one of the hottest games in the country at the moment, along with *Dig Dug*, *Jungle King*, *Moon Patrol* and *Donkey Kong Junior*.

Will *Tron* or any of the others have the stamina to enter the video hall of fame with *Space Invaders*, *Asteroids*, *Missile Command* and *Pac Man*? Those are the hits, but what about the flops?

"You haven't got a pad long enough for that list," said Jack Deming, a sales representative for Lieberman Enterprises, a large Minneapolis-based coin-op music and vending company. "And," he continued, "that's one of the reasons that the games cost as much as they do (approximately \$3,000 each). The companies develop five or six games for every one that catches on. Research and development is expensive."

With a possible tie-in to the coming small home computer boom, video games are at least a marginally constructive outlet for adolescent energy. At worst, they could be a mild sedative for the rude enthusiasm of youth—something to keep kids from stealing hubcaps (though a Florida youth was caught stealing in order to feed his video habit).

A sensible way to look at video games is to neither despise nor deify the video demon, but see it as what it is: a reflection of American culture. If you don't like the reflection, it doesn't help to smash the mirror. It's the original that needs alteration, not its image.

Jeff Reid is a books editor at the *Minneapolis Daily*, Minneapolis.



## ART«»ENTERTAINMENT

## PEACE MUSEUM

## When does art lead to action?



Fritz Eichenberg's *TOTAL DISARMAMENT* was part of a Peace Museum exhibit.

By Nina Berman

The Peace Museum in Chicago will celebrate its first anniversary in November. Though still young, the museum is quickly becoming an influential institution with broad-based support in the Chicago area and the country at large. As one of the first U.S. galleries dedicated to fostering a greater understanding of war and peace through the arts, the museum raises important questions regarding the relationship between art and politics and how political issues can best be expressed through artistic forms.

Founded in 1981 by Margorie Benton, the U.S. Representative to UNICEF, and Chicago mural painter Mark Rogovin with funds provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities and private contributors, the museum opened in November of that year with an exhibition and auction of works donated by artists from all over the world. Two months later, *Against the Wall: Three Centuries of Posters and Peace* opened to favorable press reviews and an enthusiastic audience that welcomed the museum's international orientation. Backers of the nuclear freeze movement also applauded the museum's efforts, particularly the exhibit's popularization of the swelling disarmament sentiment. The poster exhibition was followed by *Daumier to Doonesbury: Caricatures and Cartoons on War and Peace*.

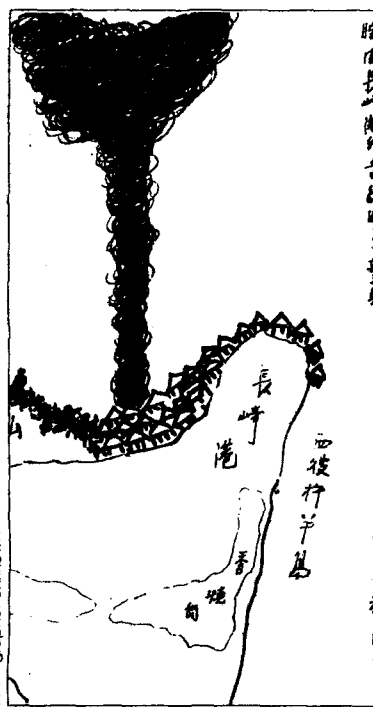
As its next project, the museum launched an outreach program aimed at attracting Chicago high school students through a poster/essay contest. The students were asked to either design a poster calling for an end to the nuclear arms race or pretend they had won the Nobel Peace Prize and write an essay explaining

why they had received the award. "Some of them were really fantastic. People were inventing peace pills," said Marianne Philbin of the Peace Museum. "Some were more realistic. One of the winners pretended that he came up with a system to significantly reduce gang crime."

The essays and posters were later displayed and an awards ceremony was held at the gallery. According to Philbin, "The ceremony was great. All the kids came in their suits and ties and their moms and dads were taking pictures of them in front of their winning pieces. And the principals came; their English teachers came." The museum considered the contest a great success and plans to hold another one next year with five times the number of participants.

In showing the general public what the average high school student feels about war and peace,

*This survivor's memory of Nagasaki was part of the UNFORGETTABLE FIRE exhibit.*



the contest certainly fulfilled a purpose. Just as importantly, the participants were taught that acts of peace—not just conquests of war—deserve celebration and attention. Yet the museum did not harness the contest energy into other activities such as workshops, educational materials or critical discussions of the politics of peacemaking and the politics of the Nobel Peace Prize. Philbin explained that the museum began the contest without any idea of how to run one. Thus, in that sense the museum's failure to fully exploit the possibilities of the show can be attributed to its small staff and relative inexperience.

Yet the museum has so far chosen to tackle politically "safe" subjects through fairly non-controversial forms. According to Rogovin, "We're trying to use forms that best communicate to the general public." Must the content as well then appeal to a mass audience? It is a sticky situation for the museum. On the one hand, the institution wants to project the image of an ostensibly non-political institution dedicated to peace. What kind of peace—a just peace, an honorable peace, labor peace—is not quite clear. On the other hand, the museum repeatedly professes its desire to educate people on the factors that lead to war, presumably including political, economic and social forms of oppression. With its current show *The Unforgettable Fire*, the museum seems to have abandoned that desire—emphasizing instead the physical and psychological impact of war without discussing the factors that created it.

Running through November, *The Unforgettable Fire* is a collection of original drawings made by Hiroshima and Nagasaki survivors. With a fairly literal treatment, the drawings depict the shock and horror suffered by the victims of the atomic bomb. Accompanying the drawings are brief narratives pinpointing the actual time and place of the scenes, the activities of the individuals depicted and the thoughts of the artists at the time of the blast.

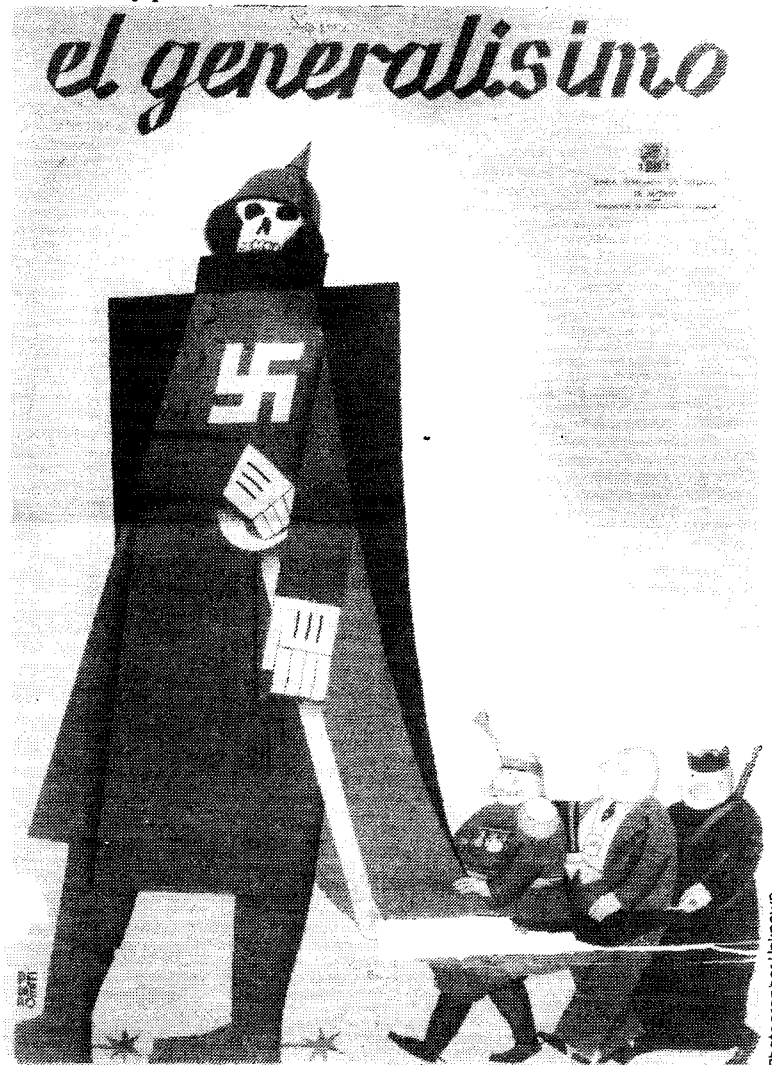
Expected to attract more than 50,000 viewers, the drawings are extremely powerful, in part because of their unassuming nature, absolute sincerity and ability to provoke a gut-level revulsion for nuclear war. As one child viewing the show said, "It's gruesome how those people were tortured like that." Victims are indeed experts, and it's refreshing to see the museum acknowledging that.

However, the drawings lack the abstract quality that could raise the depiction of individual survivors and victims to encompass the larger issue of U.S. militarism. Rogovin explained that the museum "wants to take people the first step. We felt that to the general public these are the most effective communicators that not only bring people to

say, 'Yes, this is horrible,' but 'Yes, this is horrible and maybe we should do something about it.'" But can these images alone drive people to make the political and intellectual decision to act? Two Los Angeles artists had their doubts about this.

The two, Dorit Cypis and Morgan Thomas, helped stage an *Unforgettable Fire* show in L.A. that was explicitly designed as a forum for political education on the arms race. Held in two rooms, one for film screenings and the other for film screenings and group discussions, the exhibition

*This 1937 portrayal of Franco was from the Peace Museum's exhibition of posters.*



*So far, it has tackled politically safe topics.*

also included a several hours-long symposium on the politics of nuclear war and the broader issue of U.S. militarism.

The two artists are currently involved in a project that will similarly begin with one issue—this time handgun violence. Artists will collaborate with victims to "deal with the implications of social violence—with all its manifestations—and how that violence is linked to other forms of social oppression," said Cypis. Part of Plain Notion, a program described as "the networking of art and social issues," the project will take place in several locations throughout Los Angeles. Experimentation in the presentation of art to encourage spectator participation will be a high priority.

While the Peace Museum does

acknowledge the need to link the *Unforgettable Fire* drawings with the current military buildup, their efforts have so far been limited to a graph at the lower level of the gallery that details the growing U.S. and USSR nuclear arsenals. In August, two previously unreleased Japanese documentaries dealing with the history of the bomb up to the present were screened, but they have not been integrated into the exhibition in any ongoing fashion. In August, the museum also presented *Hibakusha: Stories from Hiroshima*, a play by New York's Modern Times Theater. Rogovin did mention that educational packets were being printed that will show people how to get further information. This is an important first step.

For next year, the museum plans to tackle the problems in Latin America with a show of tapestries, *arpilleras*, done by Chilean political prisoners. Like *The Unforgettable Fire* drawings, the selection of *arpilleras* indicates the museum's commitment to exhibiting art created by those directly involved with the

subject matter. According to Rogovin, the thrust of the show will be human rights and refugees. A photo exhibit will accompany the *arpilleras* and Philbin mentioned the possibility of staging a workshop to teach people how to make their own tapestries. "We would have someone here all the time—living art—actually doing the *arpilleras*."

The Latin American exhibit will be a test case for the museum. The institution will be well over a year old by then and will presumably have a larger, better-equipped staff, as well as a clearer ideological perspective. It will be interesting to see if the institution becomes an aesthetic counterpart to Amnesty International, which publicizes individual cases of suffering and oppression without confronting the forces that create and maintain oppression. The museum may instead chose to adopt a less popular approach that links the struggle for a revolutionary society and art with the worldwide struggle for peace.

Nina Berman is a former *In These Times* intern.





## U.S.

Continued from page 11

minutes later. He confirmed that Phalangists were in the camp but said they had been ordered to leave. But in fact they didn't leave until Saturday morning.

### Did U.S. officials condone the Israeli move into West Beirut?

By the time the Israeli occupation of West Beirut was well underway, U.S. officials had already launched into a series of contradictory statements, condemnations and justifications.

• Around noon on Wednesday—at least five hours after the Israeli advance into West Beirut had begun—Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger called the IDF movement “not a significant event.” Made as an ad-lib remark during a luncheon of the Miami Chamber of Commerce and the Cuban American National Foundation, the comment was picked up by the Mutual Broadcasting System on an hourly news bulletin later that day. Weinberger's statement suggested that, in the eyes of U.S. officials, the Israeli move into West Beirut did not violate the peace agreement negotiated by U.S. envoy Philip Habib. Yet the IDF had in fact violated it by occupying West Beirut.

• By Thursday morning, the administration had shifted positions when the State Department and the White House issued a joint statement condemning the Israeli advance and calling for “an immediate pullback.” This statement seemed to acknowledge that Israel broke the Habib agreement.

• On Friday afternoon, Reagan added a new twist to the U.S. stance. Asked about the situation in Beirut during a political fundraiser in New Jersey, Reagan answered, “What led to the move back in was the attack on [Israel's] forces by some of the leftist militia that are still there in West Beirut.” He concluded his remark with a call for an Israeli withdrawal.

When a senior State Department official was questioned by this reporter about Reagan's reference to a “leftist militia” attack on the IDF, he said that Reagan was referring to the Mourabitoun—the Moslem militia force allied with the PLO during the Israeli siege. The official said there had been some fighting after Israel entered West Beirut on Wednesday. “That's all” he believed the president was referring to. But no State Department official claims that fighting preceded the Israeli advance.

### Did U.S. officials condone the Israeli breach of the Habib agreement?

Under the terms of the agreement, Israel

was to respect the ceasefire and was not supposed to advance any of its military positions in Beirut. The question of IDF withdrawal from Lebanon was to be negotiated at a later date. And under the agreement the PLO would withdraw most of its forces from Lebanon, but would be allowed to leave behind a staff of about 100 to maintain a PLO office in Beirut. Also under the agreement, a multinational force of American, French and Italian soldiers was scheduled to move into positions between Israeli and PLO forces to guarantee that the ceasefire would hold and the withdrawal would be carried out. Some withdrawals by Israeli forces were also anticipated.

• On September 20—48 hours after the final day of the massacre—in an interview on Saudi TV, PLO leader Arafat accused the Reagan administration of breaking the Habib agreement. “The pledges that were made to us...through U.S. Envoy Habib...prior to the departure of the Palestinian forces from Beirut...said that the U.S. guarantees: the protection of the Palestinian refugee camps and their inhabitants and the protection of Palestinian institutions—health, cultural, educational and social institutions. That is clearly stated in the agreement.... There has been a deception.”

• In addition to accusing the U.S. of negligence in implementing the terms of the agreement, Arafat, along with the Lebanese Moslem leaders Shafiq al-Wazzan, the prime minister, and Saeb Salam, the intermediary for the PLO during the Habib negotiations, claimed that the September 10 withdrawal of U.S. Marines from Beirut after the PLO withdrawal was premature. They alleged that this early pullout forced the French and Italian contingents to leave earlier than expected as well. Arab officials charged that the early departure of the multinational force deprived the Palestinian camps of the security arrangements the Habib agreement guaranteed.

State Department officials refuse to respond to these charges, which began immediately after the multinational force withdrew and grew increasingly louder when Israel entered West Beirut on September 15.

• Early in the Habib negotiations between the IDF and the PLO, the Israelis had consistently pointed out that, in their view, the refugee camps were not part of the city—they were located in suburbs of Beirut. Therefore, when the Israeli forces took positions outside the refugee camps, it could be claimed that technically they had not broken the agreement.

• In the press statement from the State Department and the White House on September 16, the U.S. officially condemned the move of Israeli forces to “strategic positions throughout West Beirut” but sidestepped the issue of the Israeli moves around the refugee camps.

• When asked to respond to the Arab allegations that there had been a U.S. pledge to safeguard the camps, U.S. officials refused to “go into the specifics.” But a senior French government official in Washington said off the record that the text of the pledges and of the deployment plans to implement them specifically called for the French contingent to take up positions around the camps while the PLO forces withdrew. But the French troops never assumed these positions because, according to the French official, Israeli forces advanced closer to the camps, thereby blocking the French contingent.

Neither officials of the Reagan administration nor the French government would comment publicly on the episode. But if it is true—if the U.S. had pledged to protect the refugee camps—the failure to live up to it set the stage for the massacre that was to follow.

*Claudia Wright is the Washington correspondent for the New Statesman (London), Temoignage Chretien (Paris) and Ethnos (Athens).*

## DIRECTORY

The Directory is published to facilitate contact with organizations frequently referred to in the pages of *In These Times*. Each organization has paid a fee for its listing.

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1747 Connecticut Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20009

### The Citizens Party-National Office

1623 Connecticut Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20009

### The Citizens Party of Illinois

109 N. Dearborn, Suite 603  
Chicago, IL 60602  
(312) 332-2066

### Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy

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Washington, DC 20002

### The Citizens Party of Minnesota

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Room 121  
Minneapolis, MN 55408  
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### DSA-Democratic Socialists of America (formerly DSOC/NAM)

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Chicago, IL 60657

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### Midwest Academy

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### National Center for Economic Alternatives

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Washington, DC 20036

### New Patriot Alliance/DSOL

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### Socialist Party

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### NEW YORK, N.Y.

#### October 11

“New Jobs for the 80's—Putting America Back to Work,” Symposium featuring Tony Mazzocchi, OCAW District 8 Council; Howard J. Samuels, business executive; William Tabb, economist. 8:00 p.m., Cooper Union, 7th Street at Astor Place. Information: Fund for New Priorities, 122 East 42nd Street, NY 10017. (212) 697-2282. Admission free.

### BOSTON, MA

#### October 14

Nancy Snyder, director of 9 to 5, the Boston Working Women's affiliate, will discuss “The Labor Movement and Working Women” at the Thursday night monthly meeting of Boston DSA, 7:30 p.m., Workmen's Circle, 1762 Beacon St., Brookline (Cleveland Circle Green Line). Phone (617) 426-9026.

### NEW ENGLAND

#### October 15-17

New England DSA Regional Retreat “Grassroots Organizing and Electoral Politics.” Key-note speakers: NY City Councilor Ruth Messinger and Massachusetts Fair Share staff director Michael Ansara. Registration starts at 6 p.m. on Friday. Geneva Point Center, Lake Winapausakee, N.H. (off Rt. 25 near Centre Harbor). For details contact New Hampshire DSA, P.O. Box 8044, JFK Center, Boston, MA 02114. Phone: (617) 426-9026.

### CHICAGO, IL

#### October 20

The Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) is sponsoring a blues benefit for striking midwestern farmworkers featuring the Jimmy Johnson Blues Band. 8:30 p.m. at Biddy Mulligan's, 7644 N. Sheridan. Tickets: \$4.00 in advance or \$5.00 at the door. For tickets or more information call: (312) 346-6381.

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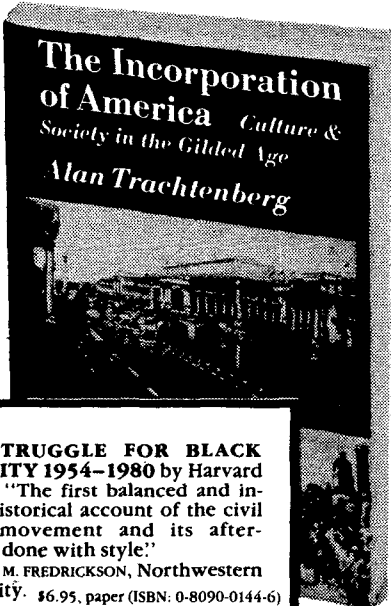
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# Namibia

Continued from page 13

this century German colonists put down a rebellion of the Herero people with such savagery that only in the last few years has the population reached its 1904 levels.

Another curious feature of Namibian life is the intense religious practice of the majority of the people. Approximately 90 percent of the population are practicing Christians, mostly Lutherans, Catholics and Anglicans. One black church official explained, "To the Owambo people, for instance, Christianity did not come as much of a change. We already believed in a deity and in a form of resurrection."

Another black Namibian added, "The South Africans did nothing for us. Whatever schools and clinics existed were built by the missionaries."

SWAPO incorporates this religious aspect of Namibian culture. Chaplains conduct prayer meetings for guerrilla soldiers just before they head into combat where they will be outnumbered more than 10 to one.

It would be a bitter epitaph to the Namibian tragedy if the guerrillas and the civilians who hide and feed them were to be exterminated as a people by a

regime that represents itself as the Christian light at the tip of a dark, barbaric continent.

## Auction

Continued from page 24

it does take a strong stand in favor of preserving the small American family farm."

Gambone spent most of this year working on the film. It uses no professional actors and was filmed in Milan, a town of 427 people that was a center of Farm Holiday activity in the '30s. The main character is played by Clint Haralson, 74, who was an active Farm Holiday member. Almost 400 local residents were involved in the film—acting, providing props and helping with all aspects of the production.

### Inspired old-timers.

The film has sparked community discussion, says Gambone. "A lot of the old-timers are starting to talk about what they did 50 years ago. Those people are proud of what they did. They saved their farms, and some of the younger people are starting to listen to them."

Gambone thinks a look back at the '30s is the first step for finding a solution to farmers' current problems. "It's a

matter of getting in touch with history and getting comfortable with your roots. And then creative solutions will emerge."

He notes that there are significant differences between the situation now and the problems of the '30s. "For one thing, there were five times as many farmers then." Milan farmer Anne Kanten feels the most important difference is that the insurance companies eventually returned the foreclosed farms of the '30s to their original cultivators. But, she points out, "If we lose our farms this time, we'll never get them back." Her 25-year-old son Kent represents the fourth generation of Kantens to till soil that has been in the family for over 100 years. But she and her husband Chuck fear for his future, wondering if it would have been better if he had left farming before the bottom fell

out of the grain market.

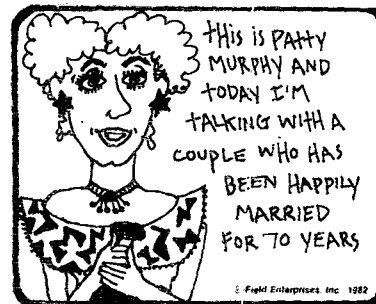
Despite the desperation that many farmers feel, the Kantens and their neighbors hope help may be in sight. A foreclosure moratorium failed by only one vote in the Minnesota legislature last year, and they believe that a few more penny auctions may be enough to push the legislation through next time.

Even so, they realize that a moratorium and a minimum farm price bill would be only a temporary solution to the problems of the family farm. They see their way of life being threatened and they don't know what to do about it. But they are encouraged by the growing unity and activism they see among their neighbors.

Sam Delson is a Minnesota writer who has worked at *The Nation*.

## Sylvia

by Nicole Hollander



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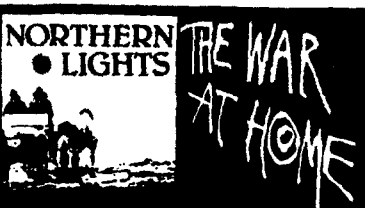
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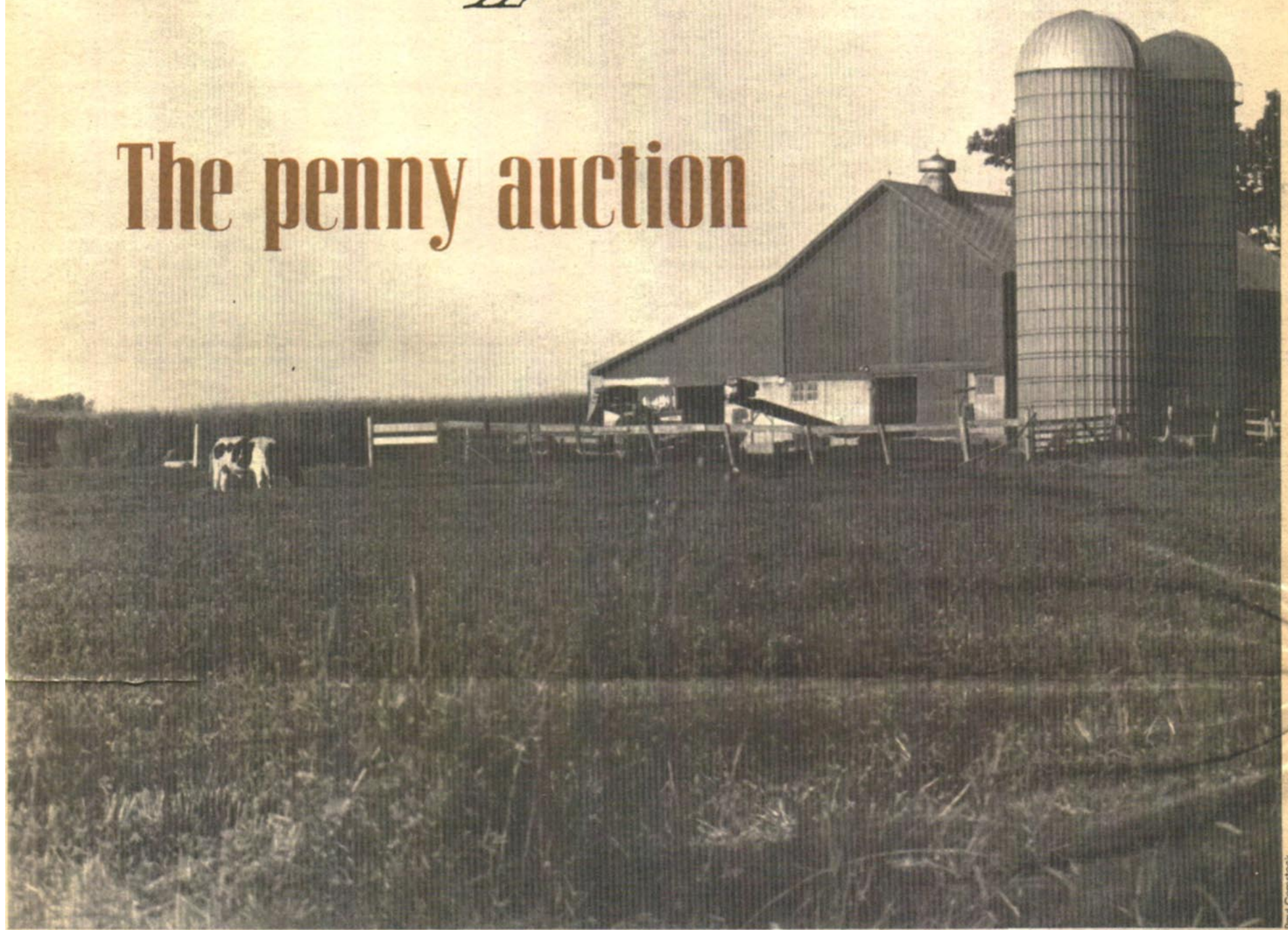
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# The penny auction



Paul Cornstock

By Sam Delson

**D**URING THE GREAT DEPRESSION, Midwestern farmers were caught between a rock and a hard place—beset by falling commodity prices and growing pressure from lending institutions. In some Minnesota counties, as many as 90 percent of the farmers lost their land to foreclosure.

But instead of meekly surrendering, the farmers banded together and went on strike, withholding their grain. The strike was followed by the development of a number of creative civil disobedience techniques that convinced first the state of Minnesota and then the federal government to enact a moratorium on foreclosures. Minnesota Governor Floyd B. Olson hailed the legislation as “a triumph of human rights over property rights.”

Now, 50 years later, young farmers suffering from a similar cash crunch are listening to their elders in an attempt to apply the lessons of the '30s to the problems of the '80s.

In September of 1932, the newly-formed Farmer's Holiday Association launched its first strike. In Montevideo, Minn., 200 farmers organized picket lines. In the neighboring towns of Dawson and Boyd, chicken and cattle were “liberated” from their trips to the slaughterhouse. The same activities were duplicated in other areas of the state and

the Midwest.

But the strike was not a success. Farmers found that it was too hard to police all movements of grain and livestock. They also feared that their activities would jeopardize the electoral chances of gubernatorial candidate Floyd B. Olson and his Farmer-Labor Party. So strike activity came to a halt by the end of October.

The failure of the strike and the growing number of foreclosures led the Farm Holiday movement to develop an innovative technique called the penny auction. Local farmers would band together at auctions to prevent bids of more than a few cents for foreclosed property. One tactic was to remove potential bidders' clothing—this was often enough to keep them from thwarting the penny auction. If the farmers succeeded, the use of the land and equipment would then revert to the foreclosed farmer. After several penny auctions in a county, insurance companies stopped their foreclosures. Still, the auction itself was only the first step in saving a farm. After the auction stopped the foreclosure, a county “lending committee” would try to work out a financial payback plan that was fair to both the lender and the holder of the mortgage.

Hundreds of penny auctions were held in western Minnesota in the winter of 1932-33. Though the activity was illegal, the traditionally law-abiding farmers felt they had no alternative. When a sheriff in Willmar tried to prevent 1,000 farm-

ers from staging a penny auction, Farm Holiday leader John Bosch had eight of his men—“two for each arm and two for each leg”—inconvenience the sheriff until the sale was over. After Olson was elected governor, Bosch worked out an agreement with him in which the governor relieved local police officials of responsibility for preventing the penny sales.

## Moratorium forced.

The auctions soon forced the state to respond to the farmers' problems. On Feb. 23, 1933, Olson proclaimed a temporary moratorium on farm foreclosures. On March 22, almost 20,000 farmers stormed the state capitol to demonstrate in favor of a longer moratorium. And in April the legislature passed an act relieving debtors and extending the moratorium for two years. Minnesota's action influenced other states to follow suit. Later that spring the U.S. Congress passed the Agricultural Adjustment Act and the Farm Credit Act. In June, 1934, Congress passed the Frazier-Lemke Act, establishing a national foreclosure moratorium.

The parallels between the farm situations in the '30s and the '80s are becoming more apparent every day. On August 25, farmers in Westbrook, Minn., banded together to hold the first penny auction in almost 50 years. But when auctioneer Rich Reiner saw what was hap-

pening, he cancelled the sale.

Yet the abortive penny auction had the same effect as a successful one. Farmer Wydon Hanson still has his land, and the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) has agreed to discuss new options for financing his farm.

“I learned what neighbors are today,” said Hanson. “I found out what love and respect is.”

His wife Aretta added, “The auction won't save us in the long run...but I like the idea that farmers, even some we didn't know, were willing to stand together with us.”

Several other penny auctions have been planned and then called off in recent weeks, and most observers expect that there will be many penny sales this fall.

Further attention has been drawn to the situation by independent filmmaker Jim Gambone, who recently completed the filming of *Foreclosure*, a 20-minute educational film that he will premier in Milan, Minn., in early December. Available after December 15 from Community Access to Media, Minneapolis, Minn., the film depicts a contemporary foreclosure auction attended by an elderly Farm Holiday member. The old-timer then drifts back to the '30s and a penny auction that he attended as a young man.

“The film does not advocate ‘penny auctions’ per se,” says Gambone. “Its role is to promote discussion so that people can arrive at their own solutions. But

*Continued on page 23*